

## What S. Africa elections show

BY RONI McCANN

Six percent of the population in South Africa elected a new president on September 6. One obvious question would be — where was everyone else?

The vast majority marked election day with protests, boycotts, and a national strike; all part of the continued campaign of defying apartheid laws that has been waged in South Africa now for a solid month.

"We believe that [the strike] is the real election," said Cyril Ramaphosa, head of the National Union of Mineworkers. "That is how our people are casting their vote." The mine union reported more than 78,000 members, about one-third, stayed out of the mines. In all, 3 million workers struck across the country.

No industry was unaffected by the two-day work stoppage, which was called by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and joined by the National Council of Trade Unions. The Natal Chamber of Commerce confirmed an extensive stay-away in that area. In garment, some factories reported the strike 100 percent effective. Refineries in Natal gave figures indicating 50 to 95 percent of their workers struck. In Port Elizabeth, major car assembly plants were deserted.

Trains ran 70 percent empty in Port Elizabeth and reports were similar from other areas. Stations in Cape Town were covered with spray-painted slogans reading "Release our leaders," "Unban the ANC" (African National Congress), and "Forward to purple people's power," referring to the purple dye police spray demonstrators with.

Two days before the election the Mass Democratic Movement, a coalition of anti-apartheid forces that initiated the defiance campaign, sent an open letter to Acting President F.W. de Klerk calling on the government not to impede planned national, peaceful protests on September 5 and 6. In Cape Town, however, police charged on demonstrators in Mitchell's Plain, the biggest township with a population of those of mixed race.

A resident of the township described that

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## Pathfinder books 'a hit with public' at Zimbabwe bookfair

BY GREG McCARTAN

HARARE, Zimbabwe — "For us in this country it is a rare privilege that book exhibitors and writers honor us with their participation in this event, with the sole purpose of assisting in the development of the book industry in this country as well as the region."

Anne Knut, chairperson of the Fifth Zimbabwe International Bookfair, extended a welcome to the dozens of participating publishers and writers. The fair's theme, "Agriculture and Development — Incorporating the African Environment and the Food Crisis" — is important for publishers and writers "because we live in a region where the starvation of our people is sometimes not mainly due to climatic conditions," Knut said.

Prior to independence in 1980 nearly all books found in the country were imported. Since then a number of publishers have emerged, printing regional novels, political works, and technical textbooks.

The fair, the only such event in the region, draws worldwide participation. Publishers from Angola, Britain, Iran, East Germany,

## Minnesota strikers fight scab mill construction

Cops arrest 31 workers; more arrests readied

BY ARIS HARAS  
AND JOE CALLAHAN

INTERNATIONAL FALLS, Minn. — On the morning of September 9, some 150 construction workers and supporters overran a housing complex built by BE&K to house scabs brought in to break a strike by construction workers at Boise Cascade's paper mill here. About 10 housing units were damaged or destroyed; company officials claim \$1.3 million in losses.

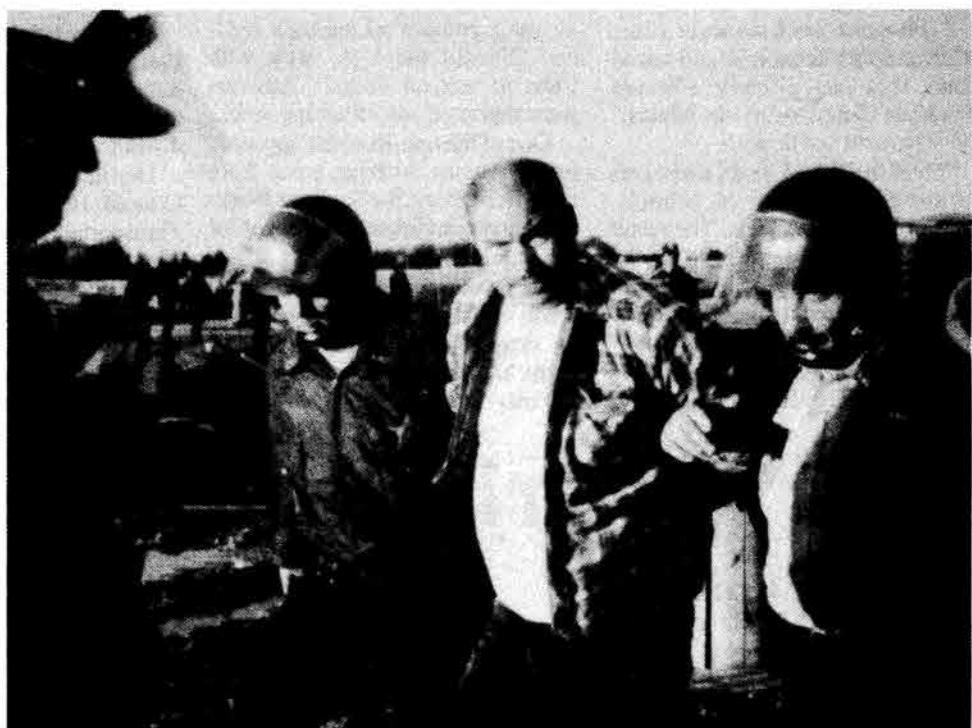
The "man camp" — as the site is known locally — had been evacuated the night before by BE&K. The incident took place after a rally of 500 strike supporters earlier that morning. Local police reportedly prevented three busloads of strike supporters from entering town for the rally.

Vance Security Corp. guards at the site provoked rally participants, calling them "queers" and "faggots" and yelling things like, "Come on, we'll take care of you."

"But they ran away and eventually had to drive through a locked gate in the fence" after protesters tore down part of the chain-link fence surrounding the camp and clashed with the guards, one striker said. Five people were hospitalized with minor injuries after the events, most of them guards.

The police later arrested 31 people, most of them away from the scene. Many were arrested when cops stopped a bus of strike supporters from upper Michigan and other towns in the area, leaving after the rally.

Gov. Rudy Perpich, at the request of local police, had readied 300 National Guardsmen to send to International Falls. He decided



Thirty-one workers were arrested after September 9 protest at Boise Cascade's International Falls mill. Construction workers on strike there have wide support among workers in state.

against sending them in after the town quieted down.

Union construction workers went on strike July 18 after Boise Cascade, a major paper manufacturer, hired the union-busting outfit BE&K as general contractor for a \$535 mil-

lion expansion of its paper mill in International Falls. It is one of the biggest construction projects in Minnesota history.

Although the strike has not been sanctioned by the Minnesota building trades

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## Strikers' actions hit Eastern flights

BY SUSAN LaMONT

Striking Eastern Airlines workers from Los Angeles to Miami protested the airline's start-up of additional flights September 7 with rallies, airport walk-throughs, and expanded picket lines.

Coming a few days after strikers' widespread participation and visible presence at Labor Day actions around the country, the September 7 events further demonstrated that

after six months on the picket line the strike by thousands of Machinists union members, flight attendants, and pilots, despite some serious blows, remains solid.

Striking pilots seeking to continue the fight at Eastern won a victory September 7 when the Master Executive Council of the Air Line Pilots Association's Eastern chapter voted to replace John Bavis as unit chairman. The new chairman is C. "Skip" Copeland, who has represented pilots in the New York area. In early August, Bavis — along with ALPA President Henry Duffy — had urged strikers to consider returning to work. A movement to recall Bavis began shortly after.

At the same time, ALPA has sent out ballots to all members, asking whether the special assessments that have funded the \$2,400-a-month benefits received by striking Eastern pilots should continue. The ballots are to be counted October 10.

On September 7 Eastern increased its daily flights from 390 to 600. ALPA reports that about 100 of these are being flown with 15 planes and crews leased from Continental Airlines. Both Eastern and Continental are owned by Texas Air Corp., headed by Frank Lorenzo.

### D.C.: largest action in months

More than 200 Eastern strikers and supporters joined in an evening "walk-through" of Washington, D.C.'s National Airport September 7.

The action — the largest and most spirited in several months, strikers report — was organized by the outreach committee of International Association of Machinists (IAM) Local 796 and flight attendants from Transport Workers Union Local 553.

As people assembled for the walk, two busloads of striking Eastern pilots arrived at the Main Terminal to join them. They had

gotten leaflets about the walk-through at an Eastern strike support rally at the Capitol the day before. "We decided to give our brothers and sisters a hand over here," explained one pilot.

Newly installed IAM International President George Kourpias joined strikers in leading the walk.

Strike supporters walked past ticket counters and baggage claim areas of nearly every airline that flies into National. When they passed Eastern and Continental's counters they hissed and gave the thumbs-down sign. Airport management and police have banned picket signs and chanting inside the terminal.

Inside the Main Terminal, protesters were greeted by a dozen flight attendants and pilots from Trump Shuttle, who clapped and cheered as strikers walked through several times. Some 800 Eastern strikers went to work at Trump in early June after the sale of the New York-Boston-Washington, D.C. shuttle was finalized.

The march circled the terminal, and everyone began clapping and chanting, "Stop Lorenzo." Workers on the balcony and in the restaurant joined in.

Workers from other airlines came out to watch. Employees from restaurants, newsstands, and a bookstore gave the thumbs-up sign, and some came out to shake strikers' hands.

Telephone workers from nearby Fairfax County, Virginia, who recently ended their strike against Bell Atlantic, participated. "You supported us during our strike," said one phone worker. "But we were only out 23 days. We need to show you solidarity now."

More than 500 strikers, family members, and supporters marched and rallied at Miami International Airport September 10 after winning a fight to force the Airport Authority to

Continued on Page 7

Titles from Pathfinder were in great demand

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# Seattle socialist condemns attack on desegregation

"The SOS [Save Our Schools] Initiative that is at the center of this year's election debate, is racist to the core and should be resoundingly defeated," explained Robbie Scherr, Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Seattle, in a recent campaign statement.

The initiative will be on the ballot in the November city elections. SOS

ment in 1988 was officially 11.7 percent compared to an overall rate of 5.5 percent. Blacks today earn 56 percent of white earnings. . . .

"The Seattle SOS Initiative is a crude attempt to codify this retreat by making segregation and the resulting inequality a matter of law," explains the statement.

The Seattle SWP campaign calls

"The rectification process in Cuba is a social movement led by the Communist Party involving millions of people in the fight against bureaucratic methods and to advance socialism," explained Rosenberg.

"The Cuban people reject the dog-eat-dog ideas generated by the drive for personal profits and the capitalist idea that man is a greedy animal, capable of being motivated by only the carrot or the stick," added the SWP candidate.

"Working people should demand an end to Washington's aggression against the Cuban revolution — end the trade embargo, stop the travel ban, and halt the military threats. Normalize relations with Cuba," concluded Rosenberg.

for a "campaign on the part of the labor movement, civil rights organizations, and others to fight to maintain busing in Seattle" and a no vote on the initiative.

The August 19 *Houston Chronicle* ran a column asking their readers: "Should the U.S. work with Cuba in war on drugs?" Answers were reprinted the following week.

One of the opinions that appeared in the August 29 issue came from Greg Rosenberg, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Houston.

While most of the specific points made by Rosenberg on Cuba's war on drugs were edited out of his reply, the broader comments were left in.

The Socialist Workers Party in Philadelphia has announced the candidacy of Kibwe Diarra for city controller and Emily Fitzsimmons for district attorney.

Diarra, 42, is a rail worker for Conrail. He is a member of United Transportation Union Local 300. A Vietnam era veteran, Diarra is a longtime fighter for civil rights.

Fitzsimmons, 24, is a garment worker at Pincus Brothers-Maxwell. She is a member of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers



Militant/Selva Nebbia

Philadelphia Socialist Workers Party candidates Emily Fitzsimmons and Kibwe Diarra.

Union (ACTWU) Local 379. Fitzsimmons has been active in the movement for solidarity with struggle in support of the Nicaraguan revolution.

She is currently helping to build

the November 12 national demonstration in Washington, D.C., to defend abortion rights.

Fitzsimmons is also the organizer of the Philadelphia chapter of the Young Socialist Alliance.

## New York tribute to South African freedom fighter

BY MAREA HIMELGRIN

NEW YORK — Three generations of fighters for the liberation of South Africa paid tribute here to Prof. Fred Dube at a going-away party on September 1.

Dube, a leader of the African National Congress of South Africa for over three decades, was fired from his teaching position in 1987 at the State University of New York at Stony Brook because of his political views. He, together with his supporters, have fought to win his job back. A lawsuit has been filed against the university.

To support himself and his family, Dube has accepted a teaching position at Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington. The college, aware of his political situation and his value as a teacher, has given him full tenure and guaranteed that he will be able to return to New York for any court appearances related to the lawsuit.

Support for Dube and appreciation of his capacities as a fighter were registered by the presence of over 200 people at the going-away party and in the talks presented.

Charlene Mitchell, a leader of the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression, chaired the program.

"We in the ANC are proud of Fred Dube and how he has represented us for many years in this country," explained Lindiwe Mabuza, chief representative of the ANC in the United States.

Tabogo Mafole, chief representative to the United Nations of the ANC observer mission, remarked, "You do not have to spend five minutes with Comrade Dube to get an impression of what kind of person he is — a South African, a revolutionary, and that kind of revolutionary who is prepared at all times to stand courageously for what he believes in."

In a class on racism that he taught at Stony Brook, Dube raised whether certain forms of Zionism are racist. Dube's posing of this question infuriated a visiting Israeli professor, who initiated a slander campaign against Dube in 1983 charging him with anti-Semitism. The campaign, spearheaded by Zionist groups in the Stony Brook area of Long Island, grew to include the chancellor of the state university system, Mayor Edward Koch, and Gov. Mario Cuomo.

Dube and his family were forced to leave their home in Long Island after it was ran-

sacked by Zionist thugs and leaflets were put out by the Jewish Defense League threatening further violence. It was in this atmosphere that Dube was denied tenure on Jan. 30, 1987, "for insufficient academic publishing."

However, Dube has never backed down on the question of academic freedom. He has spoken before many audiences and has always affirmed the right of students and teachers to question the nature of Zionism.

Two other speakers at the going-away event offered a glimpse into the rich history of the struggle against racism in South Africa, of which Dube is a part.

Madoda Hlatshwayo told of growing up in Dube's neighborhood in Durban, South Africa, and of how Dube, who headed up the underground struggle in the area, recruited him to Umkhonto we Sizwe — the armed wing of the ANC.

"When I lived in the countryside, hunting wild boar for food, I used to reflect that it was not an easy life that Fred had gotten me into. Fred himself was imprisoned on Robben Island."

Yeyeda Zungu described watching Dube grow up and become a leader of the ANC.

"My involvement with the liberation struggle intensified through my association with Fred, and he remains an inspiration to me."

A former student of Dube's at Stony Brook, Sharon King, described how she had come to understand that Dube was fired for political reasons. "I realized that the people who hate Professor Dube hate him not because he lies, but because he tells the truth. He reminds America of what a racist and horrible country this is."

Melta Dube was greeted by a standing ovation when she was called upon to speak. "Our experience in Stony Brook brought back many memories of South Africa. Fred was imprisoned on Robben Island just 10 days before we were to be married."

Speaking to the predominantly South African audience, Melta Dube said, "We do hope all of this will come to an end. Not only for us, but for all the struggling people of South Africa and that we will all be able to return home."

Fred Dube closed the program by saying, "The hero here tonight is not me, but all of you who make an event like this one possible."

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Militant/Jon Hillson  
Bensonhurst demonstration August 31 to protest murder of Black youth

# In wake of Brooklyn lynching, more racist attacks in New York

BY JON HILLSON

NEW YORK — In what has become a long string of killings by cops of Blacks and Latinos in this city, Henry Hughes, a 25-year-old Black, was killed September 9 as police officers were arresting him.

Allegedly apprehending Hughes for purse-snatching, at least eight city and transit cops were involved in the incident that took place in the Bronx.

Several eyewitnesses described the beating of the hand-cuffed man that led to his death. María Jiménez said she watched from a fifth-floor window. "He was lying on the ground and they kept hitting him," she said. "It lasted at least 20 to 25 minutes. He kept saying, 'Help me, help me,' but the police, forget it, they kept hitting him."

From her third-floor window, Nellie Gaetan saw it too. "They were definitely beating him up," she said. She said a female cop had her foot on the man's head and was grinding down on it, "like a person putting

out a cigarette," while a male cop was kicking Hughes in the back.

Miguel Flores and Víctor Vega, who were waiting for a bus about 25 feet away from the beating, described essentially the same thing. They said when they saw what was happening they attempted to intervene, but one of the cops waved them away with his gun.

Several of the witnesses said the cops were shouting racist slurs.

While the police deny using "excessive" force, they admitted to using nightsticks, feet, and chemical Mace to subdue Hughes.

The Bronx District Attorney's office and the Internal Affairs Division of the police department are investigating the killing.

Meanwhile, the eight cops are still at work, although reassigned to desk jobs pending the outcome of the inquiry.

The killing of Hughes came less than three weeks after the lynch-mob murder of Yusuf Hawkins in the Bensonhurst section of Brooklyn by a gang of some 30 racists. So far public outcry has resulted in murder indictments against four of the attackers.

Hawkins, 16 years old, was in Bensonhurst answering a want ad for a used car.

On September 7 three Bensonhurst white youths attacked and beat up two immigrants from Chile, calling them "Mexicans" and demanding they "get out" of the area.

The murder of Hawkins was a major theme in the annual African-American Day Parade held September 10 in Harlem. As participants in the parade held up placards demanding justice for Hawkins, thousands of bystanders cheered.

A few days earlier a meeting was held in Brooklyn called by the December 12 Movement, the main organizer of a march for Hawkins that drew more than 7,000 demonstrators on August 31.

Those attending the meeting vowed to continue the fight to get justice for Hawkins, calling for a march through downtown Brooklyn on September 14.

In another expression of the wide-ranging discussion taking place among working people in New York City around the killing of Hawkins, local activists participated in a panel discussion at the Brooklyn Militant Labor Forum on September 9. Presentations were made by José Berrios, Puerto Rican Socialist Party; Roger Wareham, December 12 Movement; Rod Thurton, Coalition for Caribbean and Central American Unity; and Jerry Freiwirth, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New York City Council president.

## Police brutality probed in Virginia

BY IKE NAHEM

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The civil rights division of the U.S. Justice Department announced September 6 that it would open an investigation into the rampage by Virginia state troopers and National Guardsmen three days earlier on the streets of Virginia Beach. Criminal brutality and civil rights violations by Virginia authorities, including Gov. Gerald Baliles, who deployed the police bodies, are to be probed.

The inquiry was called after widespread protests condemned the police attack on tens of thousands of Black college students and others who had gathered in Virginia Beach for an annual student gathering called "Greekfest."

Jack Gravely, president of the Virginia National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), denounced "the overzealous, overpowering, and overreactive action of the Virginia Beach police" at a news conference the day after the attack.

The massive deployment of state police and National Guard units on September 3 followed a five-hour rebellion in the early morning hours by thousands of Black students. The students exploded in anger in response to a campaign of harassment and hostility by cops and some local merchants in the overwhelmingly white resort town. This included price-gouging at shops and hotels, as well as the exclusion of Blacks from local establishments.

For several years Black students from up and down the East Coast have come to Virginia Beach for a Labor Day weekend of recreation before the start of the school year. Black students say harassment has grown each year as more students come.

Starting last December Gravely approached Virginia Beach officials to work out activities that would "minimize disturbances." Ignoring repeated NAACP requests to meet, the city council instead adopted new laws giving the police power to disperse "illegal assemblies."

Rejecting NAACP offers to volunteer as monitors to defuse possible tensions, Virginia Beach Mayor Meyera Oberndorf announced beefed-up police patrols. On August 21 she requested that the governor place National Guard units on standby alert.

These actions, Gravely said, led students to believe "people of color were not wanted or welcomed in this city."

Eric Elmore, a junior at Howard University in Washington, D.C., stated in an interview that "all day Friday and Saturday the police were incredibly petty in their harassment. They were giving out tickets for having no

shirt on, jaywalking, loud music, profanity, anything they could come up with." According to the *Washington Post*, prior to the student revolt, local police charged 1,235 people with 1,346 such "offenses."

Elmore's friend and fellow student Eddie Brady White interjected, "Nothing like this happens at Daytona Beach and Fort Lauderdale with the quote-unquote white students, when they go down for their little spring break. The press is bending over backward to say the city wasn't racially motivated.

## FMLN rebels begin peace talks with Salvadoran government

BY SELVA NEBBIA

On September 13 the General Command of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front of El Salvador began a unilateral 10-day cease-fire. The FMLN is a bloc of five organizations waging an armed struggle against the Salvadoran government.

A September 10 FMLN communiqué explained that this step was taken to "create the best possible climate" for a dialogue between representatives of the FMLN and representatives of the Alfredo Cristiani government which took office in June.

The negotiations that began September 13 in Mexico City are the first official meeting with the Cristiani regime.

The peace talks are aimed at reaching a settlement in the eight-year civil war that so far has claimed the lives of 70,000 Salvadorans, most of whom were killed by the armed forces or death squads linked to the military.

Besides the cease-fire, the FMLN made other "gestures that will contribute to the de-escalation of the war and create a climate for negotiation."

Among these is the suspension of sabotage operations against the electrical power system throughout the country, an end to the use of foot mines and explosive devices called body-traps, and halting the disruption of telephone communication in the cities.

"The FMLN will maintain these unilateral gestures in force," explains the communiqué, "so that the government and the armed forces may make corresponding gestures that may contribute to a serious climate for negotiation."

"The gestures we demand of the government," explains the communiqué, "are the suspension of repressive measures that directly affect the population and its democratic rights."

Among the five demands, the FMLN includes an immediate end to the repression "by stopping the assassinations, abductions by force, use of torture against political prisoners, and actions of the security forces against demonstrations, strikes, and popular activities."

The FMLN delegation to the negotiations will be headed by commanders Joaquín Villalobos and Schafik Handal, and by members of the FMLN political diplomatic commission.

The government delegation will include Minister of the Presidency Juan Antonio Martínez Varela and Minister of Justice Oscar Santamaría. The meeting will include representatives of the Salvadoran Catholic hierarchy as well.

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To carry out its ambitious program of publishing and promotion of revolutionary books and pamphlets, Pathfinder needs financial support from people like yourself.

In August a \$150,000 fund was established to help get into print a book on the rectification process in Cuba, a volume in the series *The Communist International in Lenin's Time*, and French-language editions of Thomas Sankara Speaks and Socialism and Man in Cuba, by Che Guevara and Fidel Castro.

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# Curtis wins new support on Labor Day in Virginia

Mark Curtis is a unionist and political activist from Des Moines, Iowa, who is serving a 25-year jail term on frame-up charges of rape and burglary.

The Mark Curtis Defense Committee is leading an international

teachers', and railroad unions.

Environmental activists, a leader of the United States Student Association, and active-duty soldier also signed up. Contributions from several endorsers totaled \$56.

"People here identify with a



Militant/Steve Marshall

Curtis defense table at St. Paul, Virginia, Labor Day.

campaign to fight for justice for Curtis. For more information about the case or how you can help, write to the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, Box 1048, Des Moines, Iowa, 50311; telephone (515) 246-1695.

If you have news or reports on activities in support of Mark Curtis from your city or country, please send them to the *Militant*.

"I'm a rape victim myself. But I'm sick of rape being used by authorities to attack people they don't like," a woman said. She was one of 50 who signed up to endorse the Mark Curtis defense effort at the "Labor Day Sunday" festivity in St. Paul, Virginia. The event brought together more than 10,000 coal miners, families, and supporters to mark the fifth month of the strike against Pittston Coal.

Supporters of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee from Charleston, West Virginia, and Pittsburgh, set up an information table there and met many workers and activists who were eager to help. New endorsers included local officials from the mine workers', steelworkers',

worker who was framed up," Curtis supporter Mary Martin said. One woman told her that based on the experience of being arrested three times in the Pittston strike, she believed Curtis was framed.

One of the last people to come by the table, which was crowded all day, took a copy of each piece of literature. "We're starting up a family auxiliary for a couple of the mine union locals," she said. "We'll do the usual things, teach people how to cook and read. But that's not enough. We have to bring politics in, real politics. And for family members," she concluded, "the Curtis case will be a perfect example to start with."

The "Longest Ride" passed through Salt Lake City, Utah, at the end of July. Activists on horseback accompanied by cars with supplies began their ride in Warm Springs, Oregon, and aim to end up in Washington, D.C. Their goal is to bring public attention to the frame-up of activist Leonard Peltier and other Native American struggles. Peltier is serving two consecutive life terms

on frame-up charges stemming from a 1975 FBI shoot-out on the Pine Ridge Sioux reservation in South Dakota.

Supporters of Mark Curtis participated in a teach-in and powwow with hundreds of Native Americans, environmentalists, and others. Many were interested in Curtis' support for Native American rights at the Iowa State Men's Reformatory in Anamosa. (See Behind Prison Walls column in July 21, 1989, *Militant*.)

Petitions to prison authorities demanding that Curtis and other prisoners be allowed to receive

non-English materials and be permitted to share literature were signed by 24 ride organizers and participants in the activities.

Salt Lake City police initially demanded a \$1,000 fee for the Longest Ride to pass through the city. About 75 area residents, including Curtis supporters, expressed their solidarity by joining the ride, forcing police to back down.

Graham Till, secretary of the Midland District Council of the National Union of Railwaymen in Britain, wrote to Curtis, "It is apparent that your 'crime' is the political act

of working to defend and promote the interests of the working class. Whilst you, or anyone else, are in jail for that reason, none of us are free."

Till visited Des Moines recently and toured the area to prepare a slideshow presentation to publicize the Curtis defense effort in Britain.

Maureen Stubbings, a leader of the National Women Against Pit Closures in Britain, sent the following message on behalf of the group to Curtis:

"The injustice that has been done to you through the courts is a measure of how far the state is prepared to go to stop the truth from being told. It also says how corrupt the legal system is, so far as the working-class people are concerned. There is no justice through the courts for working people, only for those with the ability to pay."

"Wherever we are we will spread the word for you to help get the worldwide support that you need. Keep fighting Mark and keep your spirits high."

National Women Against Pit Closures is an organization of women from mining communities that developed out of the 1984-85 miners' strike in Britain that opposed the government's plans to permanently close many mines.

Michael Pennock from Pittsburgh and Nancy Boyasko from Salt Lake City contributed to this week's column.

## Iowa meat-packers push back Monfort union-busting

BY SARA LOBMAN AND ELLEN WHITT

MARSHALLTOWN, Iowa — Broad opposition to Monfort Pork's union-busting tactics — condemned by trade unionists, Marshalltown residents, and elected officials — forced the company to reverse its decision to fire 800 members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 50N and to lease its plant to Management Services and Personnel, Inc. Monfort announced the reversal September 1.

UFCW Local 50N will now enter negotiations for a new contract with Monfort. The current contract expires October 5. "They had full intentions of closing the plant," Ross Boyer, president of Local 50N, said, "but they found that the workers weren't going to roll over."

Monfort Pork, formerly Swift Independent Packing and now a subsidiary of ConAgra Inc., planned to close its plant here October 5. It was to reopen the following day under a leasing arrangement with Management Services and Personnel (MSP) of Lincoln, Nebraska. Monfort would have continued to buy the hogs, own the product produced at the plant, and market the product under the Monfort name.

The 800 workers at the plant received notice of the change just prior to the opening of negotiations for a new contract at the end of July.

Workers were told by the company that they can reapply for work with MSP, which will screen and decide who will be rehired. Those retained by MSP would have received \$6.75 an hour and lose all seniority rights. Under the current contract workers with two years' seniority earn \$8.00 an hour. Starting wages are \$5.60.

The new setup angered workers. "It's a bad deal," one worker with 23 years at the plant said. "We gave up things in the last four contracts. We were at \$11 an hour once. Now we're at \$8 and losing more."

Local 50N President Ross Boyer described Monfort's actions as "an unlawful scheme to circumvent the agreements with the union" to not contract out work.

The Marshalltown City Council voted to suspend all economic development incentives to Monfort. The city and Marshalltown Community College had agreed to job training and sewage treatment subsidies of more than \$2 million after Monfort promised that

a plant expansion would create 600 new jobs.

At the end of August, 500 unionists and area residents gathered for a news conference to condemn Monfort's union-busting tactics.

Last January Monfort leased its newly constructed ham and loin boning departments to MSP. The 300 workers hired by MSP were not considered part of Local 50N because, Monfort said, MSP was a separate company. At that time Local 50N belonged to the National Brotherhood of Packinghouse and Industrial Workers.

Once the new departments were opened, the company bosses arranged for the newly hired workers to be organized by Teamsters Local 696 of Topeka, Kansas. Within three days following the opening, the Teamsters

signed up a majority of the workers, agreed wages, and signed a contract with the company.

Boyer characterized the Teamsters contract as a "sweetheart" deal designed to rid the company of UFCW union activists and weaken Local 50N.

The local filed a grievance against Monfort with the National Labor Relations Board. "Our recognition clause under the current contract says that we represent all of the workers in the plant," Boyer noted, "so we didn't think we had to organize our own plant."

Monfort retaliated against the union by filing charges for alleged violence on a picket

line during a 1986 strike at the plant. The charges against the union are pending in court.

The company's attacks prompted Local 50N to change its affiliation and join with the UFCW, the largest international union organizing packinghouse workers. A year ago the company failed in its attempts to pressure Local 50N to affiliate with the Teamsters.

Sara Lobman and Ellen Whitt are members of UFCW Local 431. Lobman works at Monfort in Des Moines and Whitt works at Jimmy Dean Meat Co. in Osceola, Iowa.

## Nicaragua daily covers Curtis

The following article appeared in the Aug. 9, 1989, issue of *El Nuevo Diario*, a daily published in Managua, Nicaragua. The article was headlined, "Demand grows to free Curtis — U.S. worker sentenced to prison." The translation is by the *Militant*.

Commanders Lumberto Campbell and Mónica Baltodano, and Father Ernesto Cardenal have added their names to the worldwide demand to free Mark Curtis, a U.S. worker and meat-packer in the state of Iowa.

In order to arrest Curtis, the police framed him up on a serious crime. This was in reprisal for his defense of the rights of workers, North Americans as well as Latin Americans and Asians.

Also joining in the demand are engineer Alejandro Bendaña, director of the Nicaraguan Institute for Territorial Studies (INETER); militants of the Sandinista Youth and Sandinista Front; and Nicaraguan workers and professionals.

A number of important international figures and organizations have added their names to the demand to free Mark Curtis.

Among these are U.S. Indian leader Bill Means; James Loyd Miguel, president of the Regional Commission on Human Rights in Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua; Don Rojas, secretary of propaganda and information of the Anti-Imperialist Organizations of Central

America and the Caribbean; Michel Costa, coordinator of the Nicaragua Solidarity Committee; Maire Simoneau, Nicaragua Solidarity Committee in Montréal, Canada; Dr. David Linder, father of Benjamin Linder; and thousands of individuals, organizations, and political parties around the world.

### Broad campaign

Rashaad Ali, a sponsor of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, explained that a broad international campaign has been launched to demand his freedom and raise money to pay his defense attorneys.

Thirty years old, Curtis worked in a meatpacking plant in Des Moines, Iowa. He was arrested March 4, 1988, and has been sentenced to 25 years' imprisonment in the Men's Reformatory at Anamosa.

Curtis was framed up on a charge of attempted rape and illegal entry. After being arrested, he was taken to the police station, where he was savagely beaten and left almost dead.

At Curtis' trial in September 1988, his accusers were unable to present evidence that he had committed the crime.

Despite the absence of proof and with Curtis not permitted to defend himself at the trial, he was found guilty and sentenced to 25 years' imprisonment. In this way, they hoped to silence the voice of the workers.

### An appeal to defenders of democratic rights

Funds are urgently needed to cover the costs of defending a victory by the Socialist Workers Party for democratic rights. On August 15 a federal judge in Los Angeles found in favor of the Socialist Workers Party in a 10-year harassment lawsuit waged by Alan Gelfand and the Workers League. An appeal by Gelfand and the Workers League is anticipated.

Defenders of democratic rights, opponents of the use of courts to bleed and divert the resources of working-class organizations, and all who have come to recognize the importance of pushing back the disruption operations of the Workers League have a stake in joining to end this violation of democratic rights.

Everyone who supports this fight can help by sending a contribution to help cover the costs that will mount quickly in fighting the Workers League appeal.

Please do so today.

Tax-deductible contributions can be sent to the Political Rights Defense Fund, Inc., a nonprofit foundation, at P.O. Box 761, Church St. Station, New York, N.Y. 10007.

Copies of the court ruling can be obtained for \$5 from the Political Rights Defense Fund at the same address.

# Ken Shilman: communist fighter for more than 25 years

BY PETER THIERJUNG

Ken Shilman, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party for many years, died September 7 of cancer at the age of 47. He was a member of the party's National Committee from 1976 through 1984 and served on other leadership committees. He was also an SWP branch organizer in Minneapolis, New York, Seattle, St. Louis, and Morgantown.

Shilman was born in the New York borough of Queens in 1942. Like many other working-class youth, he joined the army right out of high school. After a brief time at Fort Benning, Georgia, he rebelled against army life and became a target for the military brass. This got him a few stints in the brig for insubordination and being absent without leave.

Being stationed in the South, Shilman saw the sit-ins of the growing struggle against Jim Crow racial segregation. Orders from military officials to stay away from these actions only aroused his interest and sympathy with the struggle.

## Inspired by civil rights movement

After a less-than-honorable discharge in early 1961, Shilman and a friend responded to the call by the Congress of Racial Equality announcing Freedom Rides to the South to desegregate public transportation facilities. They were on the first buses headed for Jackson, Mississippi, and Montgomery, Alabama.

Shilman was arrested in Jackson along with more than 100 riders and placed in the maximum security unit of Parchman state prison. They organized a hunger strike to protest prison conditions and attempted to break the news blackout. He would later explain that his prison stay changed his life and interested him in broader politics. The TV documentary *Eyes on the Prize* has a segment on the Freedom Riders that shows Shilman's arrest in Jackson.

In August 1961, Freedom Riders headed for Monroe, North Carolina, where the battle against segregation was led by Robert F. Williams, a Black worker and president of the local branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Williams was known as a militant and for his uncompromising stand on the right of Blacks to defend themselves. Under his leadership, Blacks in Monroe organized to demand desegregation of public facilities, and they armed themselves against the Ku Klux Klan's terror. Shilman was among the Freedom Riders who went to Monroe and participated in the organized defense of William's home.

In his book, *Negroes with Guns*, Williams notes that Shilman was responsible for saving the life of a fellow freedom rider, Richard Griswold, who was beaten in his cell by a prisoner, an attack instigated by the cops. Shilman, who was also jailed, saw the beating and "started yelling at the top of his lungs, demanding that Griswold be removed from his cell before he was killed. The warden complied because he thought the white stu-

dent might die and then there would really be trouble," Williams wrote. Monroe was where Shilman first saw the *Militant* newspaper.

After being released, Shilman returned to New York. He joined the national Committee to Aid the Monroe Defendants, which launched a defense effort for activists, including Williams, who had been framed for their participation in the struggle.

Shilman was attracted to the Cuban revolution and also became a member of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee.

In 1961-62 New York hospital workers, inspired by the struggle against Jim Crow, organized to demand union recognition. Many of them were Blacks or Puerto Ricans working for minimum wage. Shilman headed a group called Youth Committee for Justice for Hospital Workers that recruited students to join in the struggle to aid the hospital workers.

## Joins communist movement

Through his participation in these activities, Shilman met members of the Young Socialist Alliance and Socialist Workers Party. He developed respect for the work and political leadership provided by both organizations. In the hospital workers' strike and the Committee to Aid the Monroe Defendants he collaborated with SWP leader Fred Halstead, whom he admired as a veteran class-struggle fighter. Shilman joined the communist movement in January 1962. During this period he worked in the garment industry.

In the mid-1960s Shilman moved to the West Coast where he helped lead the party's work in the movement against the Vietnam War. Together with Vietnam veteran Ron Alexander he organized a teach-in against the war in Berkeley, California, in the summer of 1968. This event helped set the stage for a fall demonstration, which Shilman helped organize, of 15,000 people led by 500 active-duty GIs.

This was only possible because a majority of those in the leadership of the antiwar movement had been won to recognizing the importance of involving GIs. Shilman helped lead the party's participation in this discussion. Having himself experienced incarceration in the brig, Shilman appreciated the risks GIs who opposed the war took when they exercised their democratic right to express their views.

He helped think through the political character and tactics of antiwar activities to win GI involvement. This was done in the face of attacks on the antiwar movement and GIs by the government and military brass, including military intelligence. For a time he aided in getting the GI newspaper *Task Force* published, which appeared in the San Francisco Bay Area.

## Community control struggle

From the end of the 1960s through the early '70s, Blacks and Puerto Ricans, engaged in battles for community control of the public schools where they comprised a majority in New York. An important chapter in this fight was the District One struggle on Manhattan's Lower East Side, which included the demand for bilingual and bicultural education for Latino and Chinese students.

The SWP was an integral part of this struggle. A few members and supporters of the party were parents of students in the district. Shilman was the downtown Manhattan SWP branch organizer at the time and played a central role in orienting the SWP membership to the struggle and helping to build it. As a result the YSA and SWP earned respect among leaders of the fight and some young activists decided to become members.

The jolts of the 1974-75 economic recession heralded a shift in U.S. politics and marked the beginning of an employer-government offensive against the rights and living standards of working people.

It was at this time the Socialist Workers Party initiated a major reorientation and began to focus its political work among workers in major industrial unions.

## Bringing socialism to coalfields

By 1977, with signs of resistance by miners to the coal bosses' demands for con-



Ken Shilman: 1942-1989

cessions, the party decided to make work among coal miners a focus. The United Mine Workers of America stood out because of the ground won by rank-and-file miners in the 1960s and early '70s to control their union, which later proved essential to holding off the coal bosses' demands for concessions.

Shilman took the responsibility to lead this initiative, moved to Morgantown, West Virginia, and helped establish a SWP branch there.

Through sales of the *Militant* in miners' communities and at mine portals, and through support work for striking miners in Stearns, Kentucky, the branch established important relations in the coalfields. Through the 110-day national coal strike in 1977-78, socialist activists helped organize support activities including a meeting of 250 at West Virginia University in Morgantown.

Following the strike, the SWP established a Pittsburgh-Morgantown District to reinforce and expand the orientation to the coalfields. Shilman was the district's organizer during this period and was assigned to work with SWP members who were miners and members of the UMWA. He also collaborated with the St. Louis branch and new Birmingham, Alabama, branch, leading the party in its work among coal miners nationally.

In 1980-81, Shilman attended the SWP leadership school, an intensive five-month study of writings by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. Afterward he became the Manhattan branch organizer. In New York, which is a center for the garment industry, Shilman was part of leading a discussion that oriented the

party's participation in the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union and the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union.

## Confidence in the working class

In 1984, Shilman moved to Oakland, California, where he worked in a military weapons plant organized by the International Association of Machinists and continued to play a major role in the party's trade union work.

When Vietnamese ultrarightists attacked the SWP headquarters and Pathfinder bookstore in San Jose in the spring of 1985, the SWP organized to defend the headquarters and the party's democratic right to function. Shilman contributed to the effort by stressing the importance of the political campaign needed to push back the rightists.

Shilman resigned from the SWP in 1987, but never lost his interest in politics and the struggles of the working class. Before his declining health disabled him, he worked at the Unocal oil refinery in San Mateo and was a member of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union.

He attended party events and participated in antiwar and abortion rights actions. He followed the party's campaigns — from the defense of Mark Curtis to the Pathfinder Mural Project — with keen interest and welcomed the opportunity to discuss politics with younger local party leaders.

During his last weeks he drew particular inspiration from the struggles of the Eastern Airlines and Pittston Coal strikers. He never lost confidence in the working class or in the SWP.

## 600 Detroit unionists caravan in support of Virginia miners

BY KATHIE FITZGERALD AND JEFF POWERS

DETROIT to CASTLEWOOD, Va. — "This is unionism at its best, brother. Join us!", explained the driver of the car leading the 204-car caravan organized by Region 1-A of the United Auto Workers union in Detroit.

"We're going to Castlewood, Virginia, to stand up together with the striking coal miners," he would add over the CB radio in response to questions from passing truckers.

The caravan carrying more than 600 Detroit unionists made its way across Ohio and West Virginia into Virginia where members of the United Mine Workers of America have been on strike against Pittston Coal since April. The caravan started out September 8 and arrived the next day after 17 hours on the road.

Forty-three of the 45 Auto Workers locals in Region 1-A participated in the action, and several other unions sent delegations as well. International Association of Machinists Local 141, which organizes airline workers at Detroit Metropolitan Airport, sent four cars. Half of the IAM contingent were striking Eastern workers.

When the caravan reached Castlewood, the response was tremendous. Unionists honked the horns of their cars, hung out of their windows, and stood in groups by the side of the road to wave and yell "hello."

As the vehicles pulled into Camp Solidar-

ity they were met by women banging pots and pans. The camp was set up by the Pittston strikers for out-of-town supporters.

Because the caravan had arrived earlier than scheduled, an impromptu rally was held with local UMWA members. Within minutes of arriving, the Auto Workers T-shirts worn by the Detroit unionists were replaced by UMWA and Eastern strike shirts.

After resting up, some of the unionists went to nearby Abingdon to join a march in support of the miners led by religious leaders. Later in the evening, the caravan regrouped and drove to St. Paul for a rally of 3,000.

As the caravan approached the rally site the first thing that came into view was a huge hot air balloon with "Labor against Lorenzo" printed on it. It was brought by 60 Eastern strikers from Washington, D.C.

The United Auto Workers presented the mine workers with a \$110,000 check. Collections taken in each of the plants in Region 1-A brought in \$85,000, and the rest came from the international union.

"No matter where you work — whether it's in a parts plant or in a mine — or what part of the country you live in, you have the same problems," said a Detroit auto worker, explaining why he drove to Virginia.

Kathie Fitzgerald is a member of IAM Local 141. Jeff Powers is a member of UAW Local 174.

## Celebration of Life and Contributions of Ken Shilman

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# 100 at rally protest start-up at Louisville airport

Some 8,500 International Association of Machinists members struck Eastern Airlines March 4 in an effort to block the company's drive to break the union and impose massive concessions on workers.

Backed by flight attendants and pilots, the walkout crippled

Eastern are owned by Texas Air Corp.

The Eastern workers' fight has won broad support from working people in the United States and Canada. Readers — especially Eastern strikers — are encouraged to send news of strike solidarity activities to this column.

A strike support rally was held at the Louisville, Kentucky, airport August 31 — the day Eastern was to start up flights again for the first time since the strike began.

More than 100 unionists turned out, including a dozen striking Machinists, pilots, and flight attendants. There are about 20 Eastern strikers altogether in Louisville.

Workers from Trans World and Northwest airlines, and the United Parcel Service, were there. Steelworkers, electrical workers, tobacco workers, Teamsters, and members of other unions also came to show their solidarity.

Striking pilot Joe Buonadonna

chaired the rally and spoke, along with representatives of the Kentucky and Louisville AFL-CIO labor councils. Striking Pittston coal miner Ray Bayless brought solidarity from the United Mine Workers.

Eastern decided to postpone the start-up of flights in and out of Louisville from August 31 to September 7. Flights did go that day, but picketers report the passenger load was low.

With the start-up of flights, strikers have begun to organize regular picketing of the airport.

30 minutes to "sum up."

"I'm one of those 8 to 10 percent of the people that you complained are never satisfied, Mr. Coble," said Kim Bendigo. "I've been on strike for six months, and I'm here to talk about merger mania and [Texas Air Chairman] Frank Lorenzo and what that's doing to working people." He pointed to the recent layoff of 1,600 workers at RJ Reynolds tobacco company after the record-breaking leveraged buyout of that company.

Then Tom Crutchfield, president of the striking Eastern IAM local, asked Coble what he planned to do about all the injunctions issued against the Eastern strikers, in violation of the Railway Labor Act.

"I'm not here to attack you," striker Monroe Osmond told Coble. "You've never done anything to hurt me. Then again, you've never done anything to help me either."

"I don't like the way the government is in collusion with these companies to drive working people down, turning good full-time jobs

into minimum-wage, part-time jobs. You might as well start voting more money for highway bridges because we're going to need a lot more of them to sleep under when we all join the homeless.

"And you talk about the drug problem. Well, what do you expect young people to do when they face the future without hope?" Osmond asked.

A postal worker, a high school teacher, and a tobacco worker all voiced support for the strikers, as did Yvonne Hayes, a textile worker and Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Greensboro.

In his closing remarks, Coble skirted the issue of the Eastern strike, saying he had to leave it up to the collective bargaining process.

*Bronson Rozier and Chad Montrie from Louisville, and Yvonne Hayes from Greensboro, contributed to this column.*

## SUPPORT EASTERN STRIKERS!

Eastern, grounding a big majority of its 1,040 prestrike daily flights.

Since July Eastern has been trying to restart operations. By September 7 it was scheduling 600 daily flights. More than 100 of these are flown by planes and crews leased from Continental Airlines. Both Continental and

Striking pilot Joe Buonadonna

## Eastern's added flights met by strikers' actions

### Continued from front page

grant a permit to march. This was the first time in the airport's history any group has been granted a permit to march on the facility.

The mile-and-a-half-long protest went from an airport parking lot, up to the departure level of the terminal, and in front of the main terminal entrances. Airline and airport workers — some of whom joined in chants — greeted the marchers.

A group of strike activists in IAM Local 702 got the ball rolling on the demonstration several weeks ago, and a permit to march was applied for.

After cops and airport authorities stalled on issuing the permit, strikers went on a campaign to defend their right to demonstrate. They made hundreds of calls to union leaders in Dade County, which includes Miami, and to county commissioners and other elected officials, asking them to urge the Airport Authority to grant the permit. The campaign worked and a permit was granted.

A number of marchers had recently returned to Miami after participating in strike caravans during August and early September. They had traveled up and down the eastern United States gaining publicity and building support for the strike.

### 'Picket line gives you courage'

In New York, some 200 strikers and other unionists gathered across from Continental Airlines' hangar at La Guardia Airport September 7 for a rally sponsored by striking IAM Local 1018, the New York City Central Labor Council, Transport Workers Union, and Air Line Pilots Association. After the rally, many marched to the terminal to join the picket line.

During the rally Continental personnel stalked the roof and leaned out of windows to video the event — which only fueled protesters' chants.

Unionists from other airlines, workers on strike at the NYNEX regional telephone company, auto workers, rail workers, teachers, three miners on strike at Pittston Coal company, electrical workers, glaziers, garment workers, packinghouse workers, and other unionists and officials came to show support for the Eastern strikers.

Frederick Nickell, a Local 1018 member now working at Trump Shuttle, was one of several shuttle workers who attended. "I came out today because this is still my strike," he explained.

Representatives of many participating unions and labor bodies saluted the strikers and pledged their continuing support, including New York Central Labor Council President Thomas Van Arsdale and IAM District 100 General Chairman Leroy Washington. The program was chaired by IAM Local 1018 strike committee member Ernie Mailhot.

During the rally, the strikers made a presentation to flight attendant Ursula Von Derhorst, who, explained Mailhot, "feels bad because she can only picket seven days a week."

"I remain deeply committed to this strike," Von Derhorst said, accepting her special

picket sign. "Come out to the picket line — it gives you courage. Please come!" She started at Eastern in 1959.

### 'We're in the fight'

Four IAM strikers from Local 1776 in Philadelphia drove up to join the New York rally. Josefina Otero, a member of Local 1776's speakers bureau, brought greetings.

"When people ask us 'How's it going to end?'" she told the rally, "We answer, 'We don't know, we're still in the fight.'

"We've learned a lot since the strike started. We've learned who are our friends, and who are not. We've learned to rely on ourselves and on the noncontract Eastern workers who support us.

"We've learned that we won't get justice

flight in Los Angeles September 9 were met by striking Machinists and workers from other unions chanting, "What do we want? Union!"

As the passenger line lengthened, so did the picket line. Chants of "Fly cheap, die cheap" echoed as the picket line swelled to 300.

Early in the morning a hotel van arrived with the scab flight crew. Despite efforts to evade the strikers, they were met by 10 pickets. Meanwhile IAM members and pilots distributed flyers to passengers entering the terminal.

The September 9 expanded picket line was the fourth such biweekly activity, organized by IAM Local 1932 and the local AFL-CIO. A group of Teamsters on strike at Smart and



More than 500 Eastern strikers, supporters protested at Miami airport September 10.

in the courtroom," she continued, explaining that a bankruptcy court hearing had been set for September 12 on Eastern's request to sell nine of its 13 Philadelphia gates, along with 16 planes and several international routes, to Midway Airlines.

"Some people ask us if the strike won't be over for us if the gates are sold. Our answer is no. We see beyond Philadelphia. We're part of a national strike and a national movement, and we're in this fight no matter what happens to the gates. That's our message," she said to cheers.

The court approved the \$210 million assets sale September 12.

### 'What do we want? Union!'

Passengers arriving for Eastern's 9:20 a.m.

Final stores, IAM members from other locals, and Hyatt Hotel workers were among the unionists who came down to the airport that day.

The September 9 picket included a march to the Burlington air freight terminal, about a mile and a half from the Eastern facility. At the terminal, United Mine Workers member Maurice Moorleghen, in town to build support for the Pittston strike, led the crowd in a chant of "From Eastern to Pittston, we're gonna draw the line! We're gonna stick together on the picket line!" Burlington is a Pittston subsidiary.

Marchers also went to a Hyatt Hotel where management is dragging its feet in negotiations with the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees. When they reached the hotel,

they marched into the lobby shouting, "We support the Hyatt workers! Contract now!"

### Eastern's ribbon-cutting flops

Hundreds of Eastern strikers and other members of IAM Local 1650, which represents workers at Trans World Airlines' maintenance base in Kansas City, Missouri, joined in a day of expanded picketing September 7 to protest the start-up of four daily flights out of Kansas City International Airport for the first time since the strike started in March.

Picketing began at 6:00 a.m. and continued throughout the day at the Continental-Eastern gate. Auto workers, Teamsters, service employees, teachers, and other unionists joined in.

The picket lines reached their peak around 11:00 a.m., when Eastern held a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Picketers cheered and laughed when a young girl wandered into Eastern's event carrying a "Stop Lorenzo" balloon.

Eastern's ceremony was "smaller than planned," airline officials admitted. At times it was almost drowned out by strikers' chants.

IAM Local 1650 President Herb Johnson announced that two high schools canceled their bands and cheerleaders' participation in what had been billed as Eastern's "homecoming." The mayor and city council members were unable to attend because of "heavy workloads," he said.

### Greensboro, Boston pickets

Some 30 strikers and supporters turned out at the Greensboro, North Carolina, airport September 7 to begin a week of stepped-up picketing there.

IAM members from USAir, textile union officials and members, postal workers, rail workers, students, and others came to show their support for the strike.

Full-page ads had announced the start of five daily flights to Atlanta with \$59 fares. Eastern officials hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony for airport officials and businessmen.

Of the five projected flights, only three took off, each with 20 to 50 passengers. The early morning flight was never allowed to be booked, and an evening departure was canceled due to mechanical problems.

In Boston 20 electrical workers on strike against New England Telephone joined strikers from IAM Local 1726 at the airport September 7 for a picket line that lasted from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

IAM members from TWA, Trump Shuttle, Swissair, United, and Northwest airlines also turned out, along with other unionists. Rail workers from Amtrak came to the picket line on their "down time" between trains. The picket line was the largest in weeks.

*Striking Eastern IAM members Nancy Brown from Washington, D.C., Zena McFadden from Miami, and Maggie Pucci from Boston contributed to this article, along with Geoff Mirelowitz from Los Angeles, Martin Hill from Kansas City, and Sherrie Love from Greensboro.*

# New openings for revolutionists in Canada

BY JOHN STEELE

MONTRÉAL — The need to step up solidarity in defense of the Cuban revolution and the continuing strike against Eastern Airlines were central topics of discussion at two recent meetings of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Workers League of Canada.

The meetings, which took place August 5 and September 2–4, also discussed the new opportunities for building a communist organization whose members are based in the industrial unions.

In response to these openings the central committee decided to immediately open a branch of the RWL in Vancouver, British Columbia, on Canada's Pacific Coast. It also approved a proposal urging RWL members to become active in the International Association of Machinists (IAM) and the Canadian Auto Workers union (CAW).

Moreover, to make the French-language magazine *Lutte ouvrière* a more effective socialist educational tool, it was decided to change it from a monthly to an expanded magazine published every three months.

In his report on building solidarity with Cuba, RWL Executive Secretary Steve Penner explained that despite the talk of détente between the United States and the Soviet Union, Washington's military and economic threats against Cuba and other Third World countries that dare to defy the imperialist empire are intensifying.

"By showing how working people can stand up to imperialism and build a new, more just, and more humane society, Cuba is showing the way forward for all of humanity," Penner said. "This is why Cuba has earned Washington's undying hatred. It's why Cuba is the central target of the U.S. State Department's massive propaganda campaign against communism. And it's why Cuba has been the victim of a 30-year economic blockade, CIA assassination attempts on its leaders, sabotage, and other forms of harassment."

On May 20, Penner noted, as part of the annual Operation Global Shield war exercises, the U.S. Air Force rehearsed a massive airstrike against Cuba's western provinces. This November, in a violation of Cuba's sovereignty, the U.S. government is scheduled to begin a pilot project of illegal television broadcasts to Cuba through its TV Martí station.

"The number one priority of the RWL,"

Penner said, "is to get out the truth about the Cuban revolution and help build a broad movement of solidarity with it. We need to make every effort to work together with forces in the unions, the New Democratic Party, the Communist Party, and other organizations who agree with the need to do this."

Organizations like the Toronto-based Canada-Cuba Friendship Association, which also exist in Montréal and Vancouver, have an important role to play in building this movement, he said.

Over the next months, RWL members will be helping to build and will participate in a major international conference on the subject "Thirty Years of the Cuban Revolution". It is taking place November 1–4 in Halifax, Nova Scotia, on Canada's Atlantic Coast.

The conference is sponsored by the Canadian Association of Latin American and Caribbean Studies.

Michel Dugré, the RWL candidate in the Montréal district of Laurier running in the September 25 Québec provincial elections, is getting the facts about Cuba to working people in election rallies in Montréal, Toronto, and Vancouver.

RWL members are also participating in a

nine-week international campaign to sell 9,000 subscriptions to the *Militant* and other socialist publications that explain the truth about Cuba.

## Major expansion

In a report on expanding the RWL's political work, Margaret Manwaring reviewed the stakes in the half-year strike of 8,000 Machinists against Eastern Airlines, one of the major airlines in North America. While the strike is centered in the United States, there

## "The number one priority is to get out the truth about the Cuban revolution."

are Eastern workers on strike at airports in Toronto, Montréal, and Ottawa.

"The IAM strike against concessions and union-busting has set an example for workers throughout North America," Manwaring said. "Its outcome, which is not decided, will affect the ability of working people throughout North America to fight back against the efforts of the employers to make us pay for the growing crisis of the capitalist system. More solidarity is needed here in Canada."

"Through struggles like the one at Eastern," Manwaring continued, "rank-and-file workers will discover why business-oriented unionism can't work. They will learn how to take the unions into their own hands and use them as weapons to defend the interests of all working people....

"The strike against Eastern has pushed forward a layer of rank-and-file leaders," she stressed. "This is a harbinger of developments to come in struggles that will break out as the capitalist crisis worsens. We will have an opportunity to win more and more fighters like these to a socialist perspective."

"This is why we must expand our work into the IAM and the CAW — unions that play an important role in the labor movement," said Manwaring. "By being active there as our members already are in the United Steelworkers of America and the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, we will become much more a part of the broad fighting vanguard that is being forged today."

Vancouver is the third-largest working-class center in Canada after Montréal and Toronto, Manwaring pointed out. "By building a branch in Vancouver at this time the RWL will have a much clearer view of the struggles of workers and farmers throughout the country. We will be able to meet many more workers who are resisting the attacks of the employers."

In spring 1985 the RWL closed down its Vancouver branch — a branch that had existed for many years — and concentrated its forces in Montréal and Toronto. This decision to retreat organizationally was a reflection of the impact on the RWL of the defeats suffered by the working class in the years following the 1981–82 recession when large numbers of workers voted for concession contracts.

"The decision to close the Vancouver branch was as necessary as our decision now is to rebuild it," argued Penner. "The geographical expansion of the work of the RWL strengthens the fight to build a nationwide politically centralized workers' party as part of a world communist movement."

## 'Lutte ouvrière'

Just a year ago the RWL decided to use the weekly *Militant* published in New York as its central publication. In conjunction with this decision it transformed its biweekly French-language newspaper *Lutte ouvrière* into a monthly magazine to complement the *Militant*. The August 5 Central Committee meeting decided to change from the monthly schedule and publish *LO* four times a year beginning with the October–December issue.

*LO* editor Michel Prairie explained that the new quarterly publication of the magazine will dovetail more closely with the real editorial resources of the RWL at this stage in its development and permit the RWL to carry out the expansion of its work on other fronts.

In the months ahead, many of these questions will be discussed by the RWL's entire membership in preparation for the RWL's seventh constitutional convention. The meeting approved a call for a convention that will take place in Montréal December 28 through January 1.



Militant/Janet Post

From left to right: Laura, Gerry, Meg, Judy, Daniel, and Fernando at International Active Workers and Socialist Educational conference, Oberlin, Ohio.

Fernando met the SWP at a book table at Dade County Community College where he goes to school part-time.

### 'Exactly what I was looking for'

Hazel from Des Moines, Iowa, is a leader of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee. She explained that in defending Mark Curtis she wanted to find out as much as she could about why he was framed. "The more I learned about the party, the more it seemed to be exactly what I was looking for," Hazel said.

Hazel recalled her work on behalf of immigrants. She thought she was doing the right thing in reassuring those applying for amnesty that they had nothing to fear.

When 17 immigrants were arrested at Swift, in Des Moines, "I was outraged and considered it a personal betrayal," Hazel said. "I was so angry that I joined a public demonstration for the first time in my life.

"I protested against the arrest of the Swift workers, and I wrote letters to senators and congressmen, but what I really wanted to do was be a revolutionary and I didn't recognize that until I found the SWP," she said.

"I told some young people here that two-thirds of my life was over before I became political, so with the third I have left I have to work three times as hard," Hazel mused.

Ben from Portland met the SWP about

three months ago. Ben said he's been an over-the-road truck driver for "about 2 million miles, 24 years total." He described how job conditions made him very angry. "Drivers take more abuse than people realize," he said.

### Impressed by Cuba

He discussed what he had learned at the conference, including on the Cuban revolution. "I had no idea of the scope of Cuba's internationalism, and it makes me stand in awe of that small country," Ben said. "You know, I used to think that watching the six o'clock news and reading *Time* magazine kept me well informed."

Laura from San Diego is on her way to Oakland, California, to be active in the SWP and YSA now that she's finished with college.

Laura joined the YSA a year ago after a tour of Kathleen Mickells, SWP candidate for vice-president of the United States.

"Now I realize that these ideas are something you need to fight for, and you have to be in the party to do that," she said.

Laura was especially struck by the discussions on Cuba at the conference. "You can't just talk about the free health-care and education. It's much deeper now with rectification, and I think we have to be more aggressive."

Continued on next page

# What South Africa elections reveal

Continued from front page

at one point an ambulance pulled up behind a group of people on the sidewalk and suddenly the doors flew open and riot police burst out whipping demonstrators with *sjamboks*, long leather whips. She said they got back into the ambulance and drove away. Youths had set up a barricade and were stopping vehicles but let the ambulance through, "because they thought it was on a mercy mission," she said. At least 29 people were killed throughout South Africa on election day.

A young police lieutenant, who since resigned from the force, has charged the riot police with brutality at Mitchell's Plain. Although ordered not to talk to reporters, he has given public accounts of the incident saying, "It seemed to me they were enjoying themselves." They were like "wild dogs," chasing and beating demonstrators.

Essa Moosa, a civil rights lawyer, said the toll was the highest number killed in a single day since the 1960 Sharpeville massacre where 69 protesters were shot dead by police.

COSATU asked de Klerk to restrain security forces from brutality. South African newspapers, including the *Beeld*, the largest Afrikaans-language daily, called for an investigation. On September 11, five days after the election, the government ordered police to stop using *sjamboks*.

## Tens of thousands march

A Cape Town march was held September 13 to protest the police violence, called by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and others. After asking the organizers to call it off because they didn't have permission, the government declared it legal. The march drew well over 20,000 — the largest legal demonstration since 1959 when women marched against pass laws. Mayor of Cape Town and council members joined action.

Since the defiance campaign began, nearly 2,000 people have been arrested, at least 14 meetings have been banned altogether and 46 broken up by force. Some 74 reporters have been arrested.

## Growing struggle reflected in elections

The gaining strength of the liberation movement in South Africa poses questions to the white-minority government on what to do. Consequently, polarization has increased among the white population. This was reflected in the outcome of the elections. In the whites-only parliament the National Party narrowly held a majority of seats, losing 17 seats to the more right-wing Conservative Party and 13 to the more liberal Democratic Party. For the first time since 1948, the year the National Party came to power, it failed to win a majority of the white voters. It held onto 11 constituencies by 500 or fewer votes, and in de Klerk's former constituency, by a mere five votes.

Divisions within the ruling party became more pronounced last January, and in August Pieter Botha resigned the presidency complaining that his cabinet would no longer listen to him. F.W. de Klerk was sworn in as acting president, painting himself as a reformer ready to make changes needed to break out of internal and international isolation.

He toured Europe trying to shore up support for the Pretoria government. He made overtures to bordering Black majority ruled governments, including a meeting with Zam-

bian President Kenneth Kaunda. Kaunda is leader of the Frontline States, made up of four of the countries that border on South Africa, and Tanzania.

These moves came under increasing criticism from both the Conservative and Democratic parties.

The Conservative Party, founded in 1982 by Andries Treurnicht, head of the breakaway ultralight faction inside the National Party, pledges to resist any attempts to weaken white political power.

The Democratic Party, formed in 1989, is a merger of the Progressive Federal Party and two other liberal parties. It calls for scrapping apartheid legislation in order to relieve the strain of international economic sanctions.

De Klerk meanwhile is trying to polish up the image of the National Party. At one campaign rally he grew impatient with hecklers who said the new apartheid sounds a lot like the old one. "Apartheid is the policy of the Conservative Party," he snapped, "stop hanging it around the National Party's head."

The truth is that it has been the National Party that since 1948 has consolidated white supremacy to a far greater degree than any previous regime.

To keep a lid on the increasingly urbanized Black population, the Nationalists institutionalized, extended, and systematized all aspects of white domination.

## Excluded from representation

Except for brief token exceptions, the 23 million Blacks have been excluded from political representation. The Black population of South Africa is comprised of Africans, who constitute the majority, Asians (mostly Indians), and Coloureds — those the regime classifies as being of mixed ancestry. Not all are treated equally by the apartheid regime, which seeks to sow dissension among them.

One example of such efforts is the tricameral parliament announced in 1977 and adopted in 1984 that gave Indians and Coloureds their own chambers, with minimal



Eric Miller/Afrapix-Impact Visuals

Defiance protest in August. September 13 march was largest since 1959.

legislative powers, in the all-white government body.

This never got too far because anti-apartheid organizations have successfully explained the government's divide-and-conquer objectives.

The first elections for the Indian and Coloured houses in 1984 were boycotted for the most part. In the recent parliamentary elections, the results were similar. In the mixed-race townships of Cape Town, for example, less than 2 percent of eligible voters cast their ballots. More than 2,000 Indian students boycotted classes on September 6 protesting the tricameral elections.

The tricameral parliament and other "reforms" — such as the National Statutory Council, an effort to draw a layer of African leaders into a government body with no real power — are moves that the minority regime began to design after the 1976 Soweto uprisings as a way to prolong apartheid rule. However, in 1984 new waves of protest began to spread and the government responded with the full weight of its repressive apparatus and declared a state of emergency

in 1986, which is still in place. More than 30,000 political activists have been detained under the restrictive law and many jailed and hanged. Anti-apartheid organizations were banned.

## State of emergency challenged

Now the government faces the ever-growing defiance campaign as political organizations and trade unions declare themselves unbanned.

At a press conference September 5 in London, African National Congress leaders dismissed the September 6 elections "where another tricameral parliament will be launched, while the majority of the people of South Africa remain as onlookers."

Plans are made for continuing defiance activities including a boycott of white-owned businesses and an October 7 "Conference for a Democratic Future" convened by United Democratic Front President Albertina Sisulu, Tutu, Ramaphosa, and others to be "attended by thousands representing millions," as the call states.

## Leader 'fresh from Namibia' speaks in Sweden

### BY INGE HINNEMO

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — Describing himself as being "fresh from Namibia," Nilo Tapopi discussed the current situation in that country at a recent meeting here to celebrate Namibia Day, August 26.

Tapopi, the South West Africa People's Organisation representative to the Nordic nations, along with his wife, had just returned from Namibia. The visit was the first in 15 years, and he said he was received as a hero.

The southwest African country of Namibia has been ruled by South Africa for 73 years. After apartheid troops fighting against sovereign Angola were defeated last year by the Angolan army, SWAPO forces, and Cuban internationalist volunteers, South Africa was forced to begin the process of relinquishing its control over Namibia.

### Challenge to Namibia fighters

Currently this fight entails pressuring the Pretoria regime to abide by United Nations Resolution 435, adopted in 1978, outlining transitional measures for Namibian independence.

Foremost on the agenda are the November elections for a constituent assembly. The South African government is doing everything in its power to prevent a SWAPO victory. Part of its operation includes using its hated paramilitary force known as Koevoet, or crowbar, to terrorize SWAPO supporters and potential supporters.

"The decision by the South African administrator general to order the Koevoet troops back to their bases has been welcomed in the news media," said Tapopi, "but this is a violation of Resolution 435. These troops should be dissolved."

"For what purpose are they ordered back to their bases if there are to be fair elections?" he asked.

### SWAPO colors everywhere

Tapopi described the support he saw in Namibia for SWAPO. "Everywhere — on the houses and on trees — are pictures of Sam Nujoma [SWAPO's president] and SWAPO's colors. The most important activity for SWAPO is to mobilize the people for registration," he stated.

Tapopi gave examples of how the registration of Namibians for the elections is being sabotaged by the South African government. At the same time they are bringing in white South Africans and signing them up to vote against SWAPO.

"There is a need to send observers to many places all over the country," the SWAPO leader said.

In Walvis Bay, which sits on Namibia's western coast and is claimed by the South African regime as its own, Namibians aren't being allowed to register at all unless they prove their parents were born outside of the bay, Tapopi explained.

### SWAPO leaders returning

Tapopi said the South Africans are telling Namibians that SWAPO members in exile don't dare return because they're terrorists. "That's why it makes such a big impact when we return in good health, dressed in suits, with some of us trained as doctors and tech-

nicians. It makes a great impact among farmers, businessmen, and academics. It even makes an impact among members of the Koevoet," he said.

Also speaking at the meeting was Bengt Säwe-Söderberg, state secretary of the Swedish government; Yolissa Modise, representative of the African National Congress of South Africa; and Roger Hällhag, chairperson of the Isolate South Africa Committee in Sweden.

## S. Africa elections are protested at embassy picket

### BY IKE NAHEM

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Seventy-five anti-apartheid activists picketed the South African embassy here September 6 in solidarity with the Defiance Campaign against apartheid in South Africa.

The midday action was planned to coincide with and protest the whites-only elections carried out by the apartheid regime of F.W. de Klerk.

The demonstration was sponsored by religious, Black, and anti-apartheid organizations.

The African National Congress of South Africa's representative in the United States, Lindiwe Mabuza, addressed the group. "As all previous elections in South Africa, today's is relentlessly racist," she said. "All talk of moderation, about these elections ushering in a new era, about de Klerk's new and different face is mere and hollow rhetoric. The reality faced by people determined to take our freedom and self-determination is brutal repression."

"The answer to this brutality," Mabuza concluded, "should be unambiguous to the American government as it is to the American people — the imposition of comprehensive sanctions."

## Twenty-four join communist movement

Continued from previous page  
sive in defending the revolution along with the Venceremos Brigade and others who are going to stick this out as well," she said.

### Pittston strike

Meg has also decided she's finished with college at Binghamton, New York, and will be moving to New York City. This past summer she decided to participate on a *Militant* sales and reporting team to the Virginia coalfields. This was during the Pittston miners' strike, and she explained it helped convince her to join.

"Either you just go along with your life or you make a conscious effort to change it," she said.

This was not the first conference for Ted, a sawmill worker in Vancouver, British Columbia, who has been an active supporter of the communist movement for several years.

"Now I feel compelled to become a member in the face of what is happening in the world," he said. "It's impossible to sit back and do nothing."

Gerry met the SWP in Washington, D.C., where he went to school before moving to New York. "I'd go down to the Pathfinder bookstore and meet people, and then I'd see them at political events everywhere," he said.

Gerry was enthused about the big opportunities for Pathfinder. "In the future," he said, "you won't go anywhere in the world without seeing these books."

# Nicaragua government disarms militias

## June order prohibits possession of weapons except in 'war zones'

BY SETH GALINSKY

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — It is no longer necessary for the people to have individual access to weapons of war, Lt. Col. Adolfo Chamorro explained in an interview here. "In the first place because of the strategic defeat of the mercenaries and second, because of the great defense system that the revolution has created on a national level," he said.

Chamorro was referring to new regulations issued by the Sandinista People's Army (EPS) and the Ministry of the Interior (MINT) in June prohibiting the possession of war weapons except for those on active military duty, in war zones, or with special permits. Since that time many militias on cooperatives, state farms, and factories have turned in their weapons as have members of the Association of Rural Workers (ATC), National Union of Farmers and Ranchers (UNAG), and Sandinista Workers Federation (CST).

While in many cases the militias had ceased to function some time ago, in others they continued to carry out their responsibilities until they were disarmed following the June orders.

### Militias continue in 'war zones'

According to Chamorro, the order does not apply to parts of the country considered "war zones" — where fighting with the remnants of the contra bands is still relatively frequent. In these areas militias of farm workers and peasants are still armed and active.

Nor does the measure apply to groups of Miskito Indians on the Atlantic Coast who fought against the government but have signed peace agreements, Chamorro said. These groups have permission to remain armed and defend the region in collaboration with the EPS.

The decision to get back the war weapons is also part of a fight against crime and criminal gangs, Chamorro declared.

Numerous articles in *Barricada* recently have pointed to murders and robberies carried out with AK-47 assault rifles and hand grenades. The Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) daily has also reported on several operations to recover "illegally" obtained weapons.

An April 18 article reported demands by ranchers for disarming peasants and forming a rural police force to fight cattle-rustling. Former members of the armed forces who kept their rifles are responsible for these thefts, one rancher claimed.

"There was a lack of control," Chamorro



Militant/Michael Pennock

Militia members in Managua 1985. The Sandinista People's Militias were set up in the early days of the revolution as "the highest expression of the people in arms."

stated. "The new measures are designed to regulate the possession of these weapons."

While the fight against crime was one of the main explanations given to workers, in some factories in Managua union activists were told that turning in their weapons was related to the coming elections. It would not look good to international observers, they were told, for armed workers to be present during the campaign and vote.

The history of the Sandinista People's Militias goes back to the early days of the revolution that toppled the Somoza tyranny in July 1979. In a February 1980 editorial, *Barricada* stated, "While the EPS is an armed body of workers and peasants under a revolutionary leadership, the people's militias are the highest expression of the people in arms."

The goal, *Barricada* said, was to form militias in "workplaces and schools, in villages and neighborhoods, in ministries and offices."

In 1980, as the U.S. government began organizing the contra war against the people of Nicaragua, the creation of the militias became more urgent. Units were formed across the country, on recently created state

farms, on peasant cooperatives and collective farms, in working-class neighborhoods, and in factories.

The militias often had a dual function, both defending the workplace or community where the militia members were based and participating in combat missions alongside the regular army.

### Rural militias were key

Militias were key in fighting the contras. Two thousand militia units, based mostly in the countryside, helped insure that the U.S.-financed mercenaries were never able to hold a single town, much less attack Managua. The militias helped save many cooperatives and state farms from destruction.

As many as 80 percent of ATC members were armed in the northern and central parts of the country where the war was the fiercest.

Peasants and farm workers were often seen working the fields with machine guns strapped over their backs. Militias helped insure that coffee and cotton, key to Nicaragua's economy, could be picked for export even at the height of the war.

Many peasant and farm worker militia members lost their lives while defending their workplace or community during the war.

Militias also functioned for a time in Managua.

"I really couldn't tell you exactly how many workers joined the militias," Roberto Pineda, organization secretary for the CST in the Managua area, stated. "But I remember that at one point there were nine different training sites set up in the evenings after work for workers from around the city. Almost every factory had a militia. You could see people training all over the place."

The CST took responsibility for promoting the militias. "The whole leadership was involved," Pineda stated.

### Great enthusiasm

Adolfo Morales was a founding member of the militias at 3F, a garment accessories plant along Managua's northern highway. "There was a great deal of enthusiasm" for the militias, Morales, a mechanic, recalled. Half of the workers at the plant joined up, taking turns on armed night watch to prevent sabotage. "Participation was totally voluntary, based on consciousness," he noted.

When the factory owner started decapitalizing, Morales said, "we were all in favor of the government's decision to confiscate. We said we were ready to take the reins of the plant." The militias "stayed day and night," he added, to make sure the owner could not take anything away.

Many of the militia members started out young. Oneida del Carmen Martínez, 19, joined when she was 14. By the time she was 15, she was the head of a militia company of women in her neighborhood in Managua. "I joined because I wanted to know how to defend ourselves in case of an attack," she said. "Now I know how to disassemble and assemble all kinds of arms. It's really beau-

tiful knowing all this."

The militias reached their peak in 1983 or '84. By that time, according to Chamorro, "almost 200,000 rifles had been distributed to the militias, reservists, and the permanent army."

At the end of 1983 the first obligatory draft and reserve law was passed. Many of the militia members were drafted, volunteered for the permanent army, or were incorporated into the reserves.

Pineda explained, "We had passed to another stage once the revolution consolidated a professional army. As a result, we began a process of removing arms from the factories. The institutionalization of the army allowed the revolution to take this step."

"Our militia *compañeros* understood the need for a professional armed force that was in charge of the weapons," he added.

The militias continued in many places, he said, until after the first group of young recruits finished their two-year stint in the army under the obligatory military service law.

By 1986 the militias had ceased functioning for the most part in Managua. However, they still played a crucial role in the parts of the countryside where the war continued.

In March 1988 — when the army smashed the contra forces and almost obliterated their bases in Honduras — many former war zones became virtually immune to contra attacks. According to Chamorro, the militias and armed defense were no longer necessary in these areas.

### Still enemy incursions

"There are many places where the counterrevolutionary activity has ended," ATC leader Julio César Muñoz explained. "Logically it has been suggested that the weapons be given in there. But we have proposed to the army that it is not correct that workplaces and cooperatives be disarmed in places where there are still many enemy incursions, for example, near the border of Honduras."

While the June order says that only persons granted authorization while in war zones or members on active duty of the army and the MINT may carry weapons, apparently some exceptions have been made.

At La Hérida, a coffee farm in central Nicaragua, workers have been in a bitter battle with the owner over wages and firings. According to Eddy López, ATC organization secretary in the region, the workers at La Hérida have kept their arms even though it is not a war zone, "because there is a lot of theft in the area."

According to the CST's Pineda, "We are not disarming the people at all. Instead we are moving on to a higher form of organization. The people know where their gun is kept. If the enemy comes, the people will go to the army post and say, 'Give me my rifle,' and the soldier will know who he is giving it to."

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# Havana: minibrigade members display new building with pride

BY JOAN CAMPANA

On a recent trip to Cuba I spent several hours with Yolanda Zamora Cuevas and Roberto Sollet Lao, two young Cubans who are part of the vast voluntary work movement that is transforming their country. As part of this movement, tens of thousands of workers like Roberto temporarily leave their regular jobs to participate in microbrigades — teams of voluntary workers building day-care centers, housing, hospitals, and other facilities. Others, like Yolanda, participate after work and on weekends.

Last year I had visited the microbrigade Roberto was then part of. The enthusiastic team, all workers on leave from the gas works where they normally worked as technicians and office staff, had begun building a doctor home-office in Old Havana.

Hundreds upon hundreds of these community clinics are being built in neighborhoods across Cuba, as part of the government's priority of expanding social services for all Cubans.

This year I returned to see the completed work: a brand new three-story building housing the doctor's office and nine apartments.

When I arrived, Gabriel and Roberto, both members of the microbrigade that had built the building, invited me in for a tour of the apartments. The clinic itself was not yet open, awaiting the arrival of the resident nurse and doctor.

#### Professional workmanship

The workers' pride and professional workmanship were evident as they ushered me

through the apartments of varying sizes and layouts. Roberto and Yolanda showed me their apartment, consisting of a kitchen, with a small wash-storage room to one side, a living room, bedroom, and modern bathroom. Its white walls, open-air shuttered windows, and tile floors were well built and attractive.

Aside from the benefit of living in an apartment that you have helped build, having brigade members in the building meant the skills acquired in construction could be put to good use later on. For example, they explained, if there was an electrical problem, they could call on Gabriel, who had learned about electricity. Gabriel, who normally worked in the gas works' financial department, had headed up the microbrigade.

#### 1,000 hours of voluntary work

After the tour I talked with Yolanda and Roberto. Yolanda, 24, recently graduated as a lawyer. She did 120 hours of voluntary work last year. Roberto, 33, did 1,000 hours of voluntary labor — after his regular 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. shift on the microbrigade site. "It was practically every night and weekend," he laughed. We talked for hours over a meal of beans and rice, chicken, avocado, tomatoes, fried plantains, and Cuban coffee.

"Who decided who got the apartments?" I asked. They explained that three of the 10 units were for the doctor's office and a two-story apartment for both the doctor and nurse. Another apartment was allotted to an older couple whose house was in bad condition. The government wanted to use the land their



Militant/Larry Johnston

Voluntary work brigade members Yolanda Zamora Cuevas (left) and Roberto Sollet Lao at home in their new apartment built by minibrigade Sollet was part of, which was made up of workers from the gas works. Rent for their one-bedroom apartment is less than 10 percent of combined income.

house was on, Roberto explained, so the couple was offered and accepted the new apartment in exchange.

The six other apartments went to workers at the gas works. A committee of coworkers selected six workers, based on each individual's work record. The recommendation was then taken to an assembly of all workers who discussed and voted on it.

From the beginning, Yolanda continued, they had legal title to the apartment. After paying for it over 15 years, they will own it outright.

#### Monthly rent one-tenth of income

Yolanda and Roberto's apartment will cost 4,000 pesos (US\$5,000). This includes a 10 percent discount from the total price, avail-

able to those who participate in the construction.

The monthly payment is determined by the size — in square meters — of the apartment. Their monthly rent is 25 pesos, including bank interest. The rent amounts to less than one-tenth of their combined income.

Interest is 2 percent per year, and interest payments go down as the principal decreases. Over the 15 years of paying off the apartment, the interest can amount to no more than 400 pesos.

"What are the microbrigade members doing now?" I asked. Some had to drop out for different reasons, explained Roberto. Others, like himself, have joined other microbrigades. Roberto is now building apartments in Alamar, outside Havana.

A microbrigade is over when the project is completed, he explained. Participants can volunteer to join another one or return to their old jobs. He knew of some workers who had left their jobs for good and joined permanent construction brigades or contingents.

Just down the street from their building another doctor home-office and more apartments were being built. Microbrigade members there told me that 40 percent of the apartments were reserved for Cubans who had fulfilled internationalist missions. Close by stood a new child-care center, another product of the microbrigades. Two streets over another doctor's office with apartments was under way. A supermarket with 41 apartments was taking shape several streets away. And a little further on a new bakery was going up.

It's all possible due to the deepening of the Cuban revolution through a process called "rectification," which is drawing thousands upon thousands of Cuban workers and farmers into actively solving problems their country faces, accelerating its development, and running it better.

## Palestinians resist Israeli tax raids

BY HARRY RING

According to a recent report, four Israeli tax collectors were wounded when a gasoline bomb smashed through the windshield of their car as they drove through the West Bank city of Ramallah.

Two firebombs were thrown at the Israelis who collect taxes from Palestinians for the military government in the occupied territories, income tax officials said.

Tax collectors aren't popular in most places. But Palestinians have a particularly deep aversion for Israeli tax agents. Taxes are one of the weapons in the Israeli arsenal used in the drive to crush the Palestinian uprising, the *intifada*.

Taxes are used to drive Palestinian merchants out of business and to deprive people of their property, their right to travel, and even their right to work.

The July 19 *Christian Science Monitor* described some of the activities of Israeli tax collectors:

Correspondent George Moffett wrote, "Soldiers and tax officials sweep into Ahmed's tiny West Bank store. Claiming he owes back taxes on his annual income of several hundred dollars, they bill him \$250,000. The soldiers search Ahmed's home and confiscate \$3,000 in savings."

"Ten miles away, near Ramallah, Adnan, a college student, is arrested and told to pay back taxes owed by his father.

"He protests he has no money. Soldiers insult and punch him, seize his ID card, and force him to wait in line seven hours a day for a week to obtain temporary credentials."

The report adds:

"Scenes like this . . . have become commonplace around the West Bank and Gaza Strip as Israel continues to flex its fiscal as well as its military muscles."

Reports in the weekly English-language edition of *al-Fajr*, a Palestinian paper, testify to this.

The July 3 issue reported, "Extensive tax raids continued in various West Bank regions during the week. Strikes and other protests against the raids were conducted by Palestinian citizens."

The report said that in the city of Qalqilya, merchants staged a three-day strike after escalated tax raids. A minimum of \$3,000 had been demanded of merchants. Forty had their ID cards seized for refusing to pay.

In the town of Beit Sahour, near Bethlehem, merchants, joined by hundreds of other citizens, held a sit-in at a church to protest the military collection campaign. Youths stoned military vehicles accompanying the taxmen.

The action was triggered when tax collectors, backed by troops, descended on a local drug store, headed directly to the supply shelves, and grabbed some \$120,000 worth of medicine. No authorizing document or justification was offered.

A souvenir shop was shut down. The owner's ID card and driver's license was confiscated.

All of this was apparently done under a 1988 Israeli law authorizing the forcible collection of taxes in the areas under military rule.

Palestinians have responded by pressing a tax boycott.

The use of taxes as an instrument of victimization did not begin with the *intifada*. Israeli tax collectors have been ripping off West Bank and Gaza Palestinians since the two areas were occupied in 1967.

An article in the Spring 1989 issue of the *Journal of Palestine Studies* explains that Israel has two sets of tax laws. One is for those who live inside the "green line," Israel's pre-1967 borders. The other is for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza.

For those inside the green line, tax rates are voted on by the Israeli parliament. In the West Bank and Gaza, tax rates are set by the Israeli military administration.

West Bank and Gaza taxes are higher, even though the people are poorer.

The higher tax rate does not apply to Israeli colonial settlers. Even though many of them have businesses or jobs in the West Bank, for tax purposes, their income is regarded as earned in Israel proper.

In the West Bank the top tax rate is 55 percent. This is levied on incomes above \$12,000.

Inside the green line, the top rate is 48 percent, and this applies to incomes above \$22,800.

An Israeli wage earner with an income of \$6,000 pays 5.8 percent in taxes. A West Bank wage earner with the same income pays 13 percent.

For Palestinian businesspeople there is also a stiff value added tax. Last fall, on the

eve of processing time for olives, the West Bank's principal crop, a value added tax averaging \$2,500 was imposed for the first time on olive presses.

Around the same time, a one-time tax, averaging \$450, was levied on all cars and other vehicles. Since then, many cars have been impounded for nonpayment.

The Israeli government estimates that before the *intifada*, it was collecting \$140 million a year in taxes from the West Bank and Gaza. Since the uprising, it says, this has dropped to \$100 million.

Palestinians respond that when all taxes paid are considered, including taxes paid by Palestinians who work inside the green line, the 1986 total was \$537 million.

A Palestinian tax attorney commented, "There's an atmosphere of utter lawlessness about it. It's become grand larceny."

## Unionist fighting political firing wins partial victory

BY PETER THIERJUNG

United Technologies (Norden Systems) of Connecticut agreed on August 14 to settle the case of a young unionist and political activist who was fired from his job.

Peter Krala, a member of International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE) Local 244, was fired last November for "improper use of time and for interfering with coworkers."

Local 244 officials said that company representatives were adamant in not wanting Krala to return to his job in the stockroom at Norden.

Krala was known as a union activist and socialist on the shop floor at Norden, a military contractor in Norwalk. He recruited new members to the union, organized his coworkers to challenge the company's violations of the union contract, and discussed openly how best to advance workers' interests. He is a member of the Young Socialist Alliance.

The union had originally insisted on Krala's reinstatement. Several months after the firing the company offered to change Krala's records to show that he voluntarily quit, instead of being fired. The union rejected this.

The union's position was that Krala's firing was an attack on collective bargaining and democratic rights, and warranted a fight for his reinstatement.

Supporters of union and democratic rights agreed and since last November distributed more than 2,500 leaflets explaining the fight and calling for support.

After canceling an arbitration hearing on August 2, the company offered a monetary settlement to end the dispute. Any earnings by Krala from the time of his firing were to have been deducted from the amount. The settlement did not include reinstatement.

The offer was once again rejected by the union, which countered with a claim for \$33,000 to compensate Krala. After further negotiations a tentative agreement was reached. The standard nondisclosure agreement often used by companies prevents the union or Krala from making details of the agreement public. Krala will not be reinstated.

While Krala did not get his job back, he calls the settlement a partial victory for the union.

# CALENDAR

## ALABAMA

### Birmingham

**Living Without Housing: The "New" Homeless in America.** Speakers: representative of Birmingham Housing Now! Coalition; Elizabeth Kealy, Young Socialist Alliance; others. Sat., Sept. 16, 7:30 p.m. 1306 1st Ave. N. Donation: \$2.50. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (205) 323-3079.

## CALIFORNIA

### Los Angeles

**Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast: The Struggle for Peace and Autonomy.** Speaker: Matilde Zimmerman, member International Association of Machinists, correspondent for *Militant*. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Sept. 16, 7:30 p.m. 2546 W Pico Blvd. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (213) 380-9460.

**Guatemalan Human Rights Tribunal.** Public hearing at City Hall on the "disappeared," victims of political violence. Speakers: representatives of Guatemalan trade union, peasant, and human rights groups. Sat., Oct. 7, 9:30 a.m. 200 N Spring St., Public Works Hearing Room 350. For more information call (213) 651-1965.

### Oakland

**The Rising Struggle in Southern Africa: Angola, Namibia, South Africa.** Speaker: Malik Miah, National Committee, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Sept. 16, 7:30 p.m. 3702 Telegraph Ave., Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (415) 420-1165.

### San Francisco

**A Dry White Season.** A film based on the André Brink novel banned in South Africa. Starring Marlon Brando, Zakes Mokae, Donald Sutherland, Susan Sarandon. Meet the director, Euzhan Palcy. Special guest, Lindiwe Mabuza, chief representative of the African National Congress to the United States. Tue., Sept. 19, 7:30 p.m. Cinema 21, 2141 Chestnut. Donation: \$10. For more information call (415) 655-3838.

## GEORGIA

### Atlanta

**Learning About Socialism: Malcolm X: The Last Speeches.** A class series sponsored by the Young Socialist Alliance and Socialist Workers Party. Every Sat. at 4:30 p.m., Sept. 9-Oct. 14. 132 Cone St. NW, 2nd floor. Donation: \$2.50. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (404) 577-4065.

## FLORIDA

### Miami

**Pittston Miners' Fight Continues.** Eyewitness report and slideshow of events in coalfields by a member of *Militant* reporting team. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Sept. 16, 7:30 p.m. 137 NE 54th St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (305) 756-1020.

## IOWA

### Des Moines

**Defend Affirmative Action.** Speakers to be announced. Sat., Sept. 16, 7:30 p.m. 2105 Forest Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (515) 246-1695.

## MASSACHUSETTS

### Boston

**Defending Nicaragua: The Challenge Ahead.** Speaker: Betsy Soares, Socialist Workers Party. Translation to Spanish. Fri., Sept. 22, 7 p.m. 605 Massachusetts Ave. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (617) 247-6772.

## MINNESOTA

### Austin

**Bush's Drug Proposal: More Cops and Prisons.** Speaker: Sara Lobman, chairperson Des Moines Young Socialist Alliance. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Sept. 23, 7 p.m. 407½ N Main St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (507) 433-3461.

### St. Paul

**Workers: Defend Your Standard of Living!** Protest Boise Cascade's attempt to break construction workers' unions at International Falls. Sat., Sept. 16, 11:30 a.m. State Capitol. Sponsor: Minnesota AFL-CIO.

**Working People Fight Back.** The strikes at Pittston Coal, Boise Cascade, and Eastern Airlines. Speakers: Eastern and Boise Cascade strikers; Wendy Lyons, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of St. Paul, member United Food and Commercial Workers union. Sat., Sept. 16, 7:30 p.m. 508 N Snelling Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Forum. For more information call (612) 644-6325.

### The Anti-apartheid Defiance Campaign Spreads in South Africa

**Speaks in South Africa.** Speakers: Gabriel Uahengo, member of South West Africa People's Organisation; Rev. Oliver White, pastor Camphor United Methodist Church and Black Ministerial Alliance; Denise McInerney, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Minneapolis, member Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union Local 155. Sat., Sept. 23, 7:30 p.m. 508 N Snelling Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Forum. For more information call (612) 644-6325.

## MISSOURI

### Kansas City

**Cuba Today: Eyewitness Reports.** Speakers: Ed Haase, broadcast journalist, traveled to Cuba as member of Venceremos Brigade; Leslie Young, social worker who visited mental and health-care facilities in Cuba. Sat., Sept. 23, 7 p.m. St. Stephen Baptist Church, Truman Rd. at Paseo. Sponsor: Cuba Friendship Committee. For more information call (816) 561-0125.

### St. Louis

**The Defiance Campaign in South Africa.** Speakers: Paris Mashile, African National Congress of South Africa; Fred Stanton, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Sept. 16, 7:30 p.m. 4907 Martin Luther King Dr. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (314) 361-0250.

**What's Behind Bush's "Drug War?"** Sat., Sept. 23, 7:30 p.m. 4907 Martin Luther King Dr. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (314) 361-0250.

## NEBRASKA

### Omaha

**The Defiance Campaign Against Apartheid.** Speakers: Jimmy Sepe, South African student; representative Young Socialist Alliance. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Sept. 16, 7:30 p.m. 140 S 40th St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (402) 553-0245.

## NEW JERSEY

### Newark

**Stop Racist Attacks: Protest the Murder of Yusuf Hawkins.** A panel discussion. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Sept. 16, 7:30 p.m. 141 Halsey St., 2nd floor. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (201) 643-3341.

## NORTH CAROLINA

### Greensboro

**The Truth About the U.S. War on Drugs.**

**LOUISIANA: New Orleans:** P.O. Box 53224. Zip: 70153. Tel: (504) 484-6418.

**MARYLAND: Baltimore:** 2913 Greenmount Ave. Zip: 21218. Tel: (301) 235-0013.

**MASSACHUSETTS: Boston:** 605 Massachusetts Ave. Zip: 02118. Tel: (617) 247-6772.

**MICHIGAN: Detroit:** 5019½ Woodward Ave. Zip: 48202. Tel: (313) 831-1177.

**MINNESOTA: Austin:** 407½ N. Main. Zip: 55912. Tel: (507) 433-3461. **Twin Cities:** 508 N. Snelling Ave., St. Paul. Zip: 55104. Tel: (612) 644-6325.

**MISSOURI: Kansas City:** 5534 Troost Ave. Zip: 64110. Tel: (816) 444-7880. **St. Louis:** 4907 Martin Luther King Dr. Zip: 63113. Tel: (314) 361-0250.

**NEBRASKA: Omaha:** 140 S. 40th St. Zip: 68131. Tel: (402) 553-0245.

**NEW JERSEY: Newark:** 141 Halsey. Zip: 07102. Tel: (201) 643-3341.

**NEW YORK: Brooklyn:** 464 Bergen St. Zip: 11217. Tel: (718) 398-6983. **New York:** 191 7th Ave. Zip: 10011. Tel: (212) 675-6740.

**NORTH CAROLINA: Greensboro:** 2219 E Market. Zip: 27401. Tel: (919) 272-5996.

**OHIO: Cleveland:** 2521 Market Ave. Zip: 44113. Tel: (216) 861-6150. **Columbus:** P.O. Box 02097. Zip: 43202.

Sun., Sept. 17, 7 p.m. 2219 E Market. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (919) 272-5996.

**Housing for All!** Build the Oct. 7 march on Washington against homelessness. Sun., Sept. 24, 7 p.m. 2219 E Market. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (919) 272-5996.

## OREGON

### Portland

**Defending Affirmative Action: Supreme Court Rulings Register Blows to Civil Rights.** Speakers: Robert Phillips, president Portland National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Lisa Hickler, railroad worker and member United Transportation Union Local 1238, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Sept. 16, 7:30 p.m. 2730 NE Martin Luther King, Jr. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (503) 287-7416.

**The So-called War on Drugs: Pretext for Repression at Home and Intervention Abroad.** A panel discussion including representatives of Brothers Gaining Equality and Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Sept. 23, 7:30 p.m. 2730 NE Martin Luther King, Jr. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (503) 287-7416.

## PENNSYLVANIA

### Pittsburgh

**The Cuban Revolution: A Turning Point.** Speaker: Joe Young, Revolutionary Workers League of Canada, recently visited Cuba, member United Steelworkers of America. Sat., Sept. 23, 7 p.m. 4905 Penn Ave., Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (412) 362-6767.

## TEXAS

### Houston

**Cuba: New Stage in the Fight for Socialism.** Speaker: Greg Rosenberg, Socialist Workers Party, member International Association of Machinists. Sat., Sept. 16, 7:30 p.m. 4806 Almeda. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum/Foro Perspectiva Mundial. For more information call (713) 522-8054.

## UTAH

### Salt Lake City

**Bush's War on Drugs: Who Are the Real Targets?** Speaker: Steve Warshell, Socialist Workers Party candidate for city council, member Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Local 2-591. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Sept. 23, 7:30 p.m. 147 E 900 S. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum/Foro Perspectiva Mundial. For more information call (801) 355-1124.

## WISCONSIN

### Milwaukee

**Defending Affirmative Action.** A panel discussion with Betty Martin, civil rights activist and investigator, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Sandi Sherman, Socialist Workers Party, activist in union and women's issues. Sat., Sept. 16, 7:30 p.m. 4707 W Lisbon Ave. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (414) 445-2076.

**Report on Salvadoran Freedom Struggle.** Speaker: Ramón Cardona, representative of Revolutionary Democratic Front/Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front of El Salvador. Sat., Sept. 23, 2 p.m. University of Wisconsin Student Union Bldg., Kenwood and Maryland aves. Sponsors: Central America Solidarity Coalition, Latin American Solidarity Committee. For more information call (414) 229-6805.

## NEW YORK CITY

### Eyewitness Report from Southern Africa: Workers and Peasants Confront Debt Crisis

**Speakers:**

**James Harris,** Pathfinder representative at Zimbabwe bookfair and Harare launching of *In Defense of Socialism* by Fidel Castro.

**Greg McCartan,** *Militant* correspondent, former national chairperson Young Socialist Alliance.

**Sat., Sept. 23, 7:30 p.m.**

Donation: \$3

**Militant Labor Forum**  
**191 Seventh Ave., 2nd Floor,**  
**Manhattan (at 21st Street)**

For more information call (212) 675-6740, or (718) 398-6983.

## BRITAIN

### London

**The War Against Drugs: What Lies Behind Bush's Proposals?** Speaker: Martyn Ahmat. Fri., Sept. 22, 7:30 p.m. Pathfinder Bookshop, 47 The Cut, SE 1. Donation: £1. Sponsor: New International Forum. For more information call 01-928-7947.

### Sheffield

**The Mark Curtis Frame-Up: A Report from Des Moines, Iowa.** Speaker: Graham Till, secretary National Union of Railwaymen East Midlands District Council. Sat., Sept., 23, 7:30 p.m. Conference Room, National Union of Mineworkers, 1 Holly St. Donation: £1. Sponsor: Supporters of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee. For more information call 352618.

## CANADA

### Montréal

**Solidarity With the Strikers.** Support the Eastern strikers, coal miners, and nurses. Translation to English and Spanish. Sat., Sept. 16, 7:30 p.m. 6566 boul. Saint-Laurent. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Forum Lutte Ouvrière. For more information call (514) 273-2503.

**Capitalism or Communism: What Is the Way Forward for Humanity?** Speaker: Michel Dugré, Revolutionary Workers League candidate in the Québec provincial elections. Translation to English and Spanish. Sat., Sept. 23, 7:30 p.m. 6566 boul. Saint-Laurent. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Forum Lutte Ouvrière. For more information call (514) 273-2503.

### Toronto

**Thousands of U.S. Workers on Strike.** Workers from Canada and U.S. will discuss importance of Eastern Airlines, Pittston Coal, and telephone workers' strikes and need for solidarity. Sat., Sept. 23, 7:30 p.m. 410 Adelaide St. W, Suite 400. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (416) 861-1399.

### Vancouver

**Cuba: Defend Socialism.** Report back on voluntary work minibrigade in Cuba. Speaker: Ned Dmytryshyn, Revolutionary Workers League. Sat., Sept. 23, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$3. For location and more information call (604) 873-8898.

## BRITAIN

**London:** 47 The Cut, SE1 8LL. Tel: 01-401 2293.

## CANADA

**Montréal:** 6566 boul. St-Laurent, H2S 3C6. Tel: (514) 273-2503.

**Toronto:** 410 Adelaide St. W., Suite 400, M5V 1S8. Tel: (416) 861-1399.

**Vancouver:** P.O. Box 69742, Station K, V5K 4Y7. Tel: (604) 873-8898.

**He can still smell** — Khamis Ibrahim Mughrabi, 18, of a Gaza refugee camp, was convicted of throwing stones at Israeli troops. He was sentenced to two months in jail.



**Harry Ring**

10 months suspended, and a \$300 fine. Mughrabi is blind.

**Not to hurry** — Officials warned that 15 of the 46 water reservoirs in the London area could be

in danger of collapse. However, they add, there are hundreds of miles of embankment to inspect, and it will take engineers about two years to determine how serious the problem is.

**Taking care of business** — A London area water official said the linings of some of the threatened reservoirs may have to be replaced and this will be costly. However, he assured, the plan to turn the water supply over to private industry includes provisos to pass such unexpected costs on to consumers.

**They know something?** — Hoffman-La Roche pharmaceuticals has patented a new drug. A chemical cousin to valium and lib-

rium, which relieve anxiety, the new pill relieves panic.

**The big broom** — In 1971 the Environmental Protection Agency compiled a list of the country's 30,000 worst waste dumps. Of these, 1,175 of the worst were targeted for immediate cleanup. In the eight years since, 34 of these have been cleaned.

**Which one's the groom?** — In Toronto, Canine Collection offers upscale dog clothing. A brisk seller for weddings is the black satin tuxedo with matching top hat. (\$65 to \$85, by size.) The pooch marches down the aisle as part of the bridal party.

**He'll make chief** — Some folk

think all cops are dummies, but in East Hampton, the plush Long Island beach town, they've got a real one. He's propped in a patrol car by the highway to deter speeders and garbage tossers. Says the town supervisor, "He's my favorite employee. No workmen's comp. No complaints. He doesn't talk back."

**People are dying to get this** — "We sell an ABSOLUTE family necessity — cemetery arrangements ... everyone will need us someday. . . . Call today for an interview and remember, don't pre-judge this golden opportunity." — Ad in Montréal daily for cemetery sales "counselors."

**Enjoy** — The National Wildlife

Federation warns that eating trout from Lake Michigan once a week escalates the risk of cancer to one in 10.

**Antimacho ruling** — A U.S. trade court ruled GI Joe is a doll. The Hasbro company tried to get it classified as a toy soldier to escape a 12 percent import tariff on the dolls, which are made in Hong Kong.

**Thought for the week** — "There's a creeping acknowledgement that all the money in the world can't eradicate the nation's nuclear nightmare." — The *Wall Street Journal* on the atomic legacy of crippled reactors and contaminated soil and groundwater at 17 major nuclear weapons sites.

## Pathfinder 'a hit with public' at Zimbabwe fair

### Continued from front page

mand, with several selling out the first day. A prominently displayed poster of the cover of *Thomas Sankara Speaks: The Burkina Faso Revolution 1983-87* made people stop, inquire about the books, and discuss Sankara's legacy. The book is widely known in the area due to a full-page review in the *Herald* by Zimbabwean award-winning novelist Chenjerai Hove. The 10 copies of the book were sold out in a day and a half.

### Malcolm X

Pamphlets by Malcolm X were also quickly snapped up by the many young people attending the fair. In all, 28 books by Malcolm X were sold. Many people were especially interested in the newly released *Malcolm X: The Last Speeches*, having read Malcolm X's autobiography. Many who came to the table remarked that they had heard about Malcolm X and his contributions, but had never been able to find one of his books.

Pathfinder's range of titles on women's liberation also attracted a lot of interest. *Black Women's Struggle for Equality*, and

*Problems of Women's Liberation* were the best-selling titles, with 28 books and pamphlets sold in all.

Two books by Rosa Luxembourg, *Rosa Luxembourg Speaks and Reform or Revolution*, as well as the *Communist Manifesto*, also sold out.

### Fidel Castro speeches

Exhibitors, students from the University of Zimbabwe, trade unionists, and others attended a reception sponsored by Pathfinder on August 31 to introduce *In Defense of Socialism*. The book, recently published by Pathfinder, contains four speeches by Cuban President Fidel Castro given on the 30th anniversary of the Cuban revolution.

Addressing the 120 people in attendance were James Harris from Pathfinder, Paul Brickhill of Zimbabwe's Grassroots Books; Morgan Tsvangari, secretary-general of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions; and Antonio Santiago, chargé d'affaires of the Cuban embassy in Zimbabwe. Alan Harris of Pathfinder London chaired the meeting.

Santiago said, "Pathfinder has done from its inception a very valuable job researching,

collecting, and publishing major works and speeches of Marxist-Leninist and revolutionary thinkers from all over the world, which more often than not are given scant attention or are purposely ignored by the Western media.

*In Defense of Socialism*, he said, "is based on a comprehensive analysis of the problems we have faced and will continue to face in the foreseeable future."

### We believe in socialism

"Very simply put," he continued, "we believe firmly in socialism. And, at a time, as Fidel has mentioned, when it has become fashionable in certain quarters to gloat over the supposed demise of socialism, the Cuban people and their revolution have made their position abundantly clear: we would rather sink the island in the ocean than ever betray the principles of socialism, Marxism, and Leninism."

Brickhill told the audience about a discussion with a Cuban farmer during a recent trip to Cuba. He asked the farmer, who had served in Angola, why he went. "I was a volunteer," the farmer replied. "I am an ordinary Cuban.

Fidel has told us that the highest form of communism is internationalism. That is why I went."

Cuba, Brickhill said, "has borne the brunt of imperialist assault against peoples of the Third World. In Zimbabwe we must learn through studying works like this."

"At Grassroots we are joyous at being associated with works of Fidel Castro, his speeches, the books that come out of Cuba, and the Cuban revolution," he concluded.

"By my experiences with the commitment of the Cuban revolution I became a staunch supporter" of Cuba, Tsvangari explained. "This has made me even more committed to our revolution and to seeing it move forward."

### A viable alternative

Reading *In Defense of Socialism* emphasizes that "national liberation is both a point of arrival and departure. The revolution must be a continuous process." Tsvangari noted that another lesson in the speeches is that "in the absence of a viable alternative, economic solutions have been implemented in the world that have not resulted in economic upturn or benefit. I say no. There is a viable alternative. Comrade Castro illustrates that."

Tsvangari urged the audience to "get these books, read them, study them, and apply them to our own concrete situation."

James Harris said, "This book is important for working people, for fighters for social change all over the world. These speeches pose and discuss the questions that are before anyone struggling for social change in the world today. This book is a tool for us all."

In the four speeches Castro explains "how socialism can be built, and why it must be politically defended and advanced in today's world," he pointed out.

Harris explained, "Fidel defends socialism in a concrete way by explaining the Cuban revolution itself — the rectification process, the role of Cuban troops in Angola, and how Cuba is advancing the socialist revolution in their country."

Twenty-five copies of the book were sold during the week following the meeting alone. A total of 72 books on the Cuban revolution were purchased during the fair. In all more than \$1,000 worth of books and pamphlets were sold during the week.

## Strikers fight scab mill construction

### Continued from front page

unions, it is widely supported by unionists and other workers in the state. Last March 4,000 people rallied in support of the construction unions in International Falls after Boise Cascade announced its decision to hire BE&K.

Construction at the expansion site under BE&K started as Boise imposed a concession contract on the more than 600 mill workers, who had been without a contract for four years. The company offered contracts to union contractors, covering only about 20 percent of the work for the mill's expansion. Most of these contracts were canceled by BE&K after the strike started.

Boise hired BE&K, based in Birmingham, Alabama, to break the 1986 strike of Boise workers at its mill in Rumford, Maine. Vance Security guards were also used in that strike. The company uses BE&K at other mills as well.

### Professional thugs

The core of BE&K's operations are "professional thugs trained to terrorize and kill people," said a striker at the picket line. Many strikers and supporters recounted stories of intimidation, threats, and violence by BE&K and Vance Security guards.

"They would come to the bar where I worked and say things like 'It's too bad for you, lady, your unions are out. . . . We'll fly the Confederate flag when we are done with you,'" a bartender who supports the strike recalled.

One striker was followed by a BE&K thug and threatened with a pistol in daylight on September 10, a construction worker said. The police were called. They arrested the thug — and later let him go without charging him.

"I had a rock thrown at me an hour ago from the construction site," another striker said on the morning of September 12. He described how a Native American construction worker had been badly beaten by a BE&K goon several weeks earlier.

Boise and BE&K officials claim that up to 600 scabs are working at the construction site. But strikers estimate the number at closer to 300. Most are brought by BE&K from Southern states and are paid \$7.50 an hour, plus \$25 a day for living expenses.

Skilled union construction workers start at about \$16 an hour and union laborers at around \$13 an hour. Strikers say a few dozen people from the area have gotten jobs at BE&K.

"I thought seriously about working with BE&K," said a young worker at Hardee's restaurant. "I've been working here for five years. I started with minimum wage, and I still make \$5 an hour. But I know a lot of people in labor unions, and I wouldn't cross the line." Some of his friends had, though, he added.

Construction halted at the mill after the strikers' action and slowly picked up in the following two days. At least 20 BE&K employees left town with one-way tickets to Alabama on September 11, a Northwest Airlines ticket agent at the airport here reported.

But BE&K and Boise have now vowed to bring in hundreds more heavily armed security guards. BE&K claims it will hire up to 2,000 people to finish construction at the mill.

### Reaction to events

Reaction to the September 9 events varied among workers. "Boise Cascade is the troublemaker," said one striker at the picket line September 12. "There wouldn't have been any trouble if they hadn't brought in scabs. When you have a bunch of people rallying and being provoked by the guards, things happen. We are mad at people coming to take our jobs and destroy our unions."

"If they lose, we'll be next," said a worker from Boise Fort Frances mill, across the river in Ontario, Canada.

Another striker, at his home, said the incident would hurt the strikers. He regretted the violence and has decided to "stop going to the picket line for now."

Minnesota AFL-CIO Building Trades

Council President Bill Peterson, and Brad Skarich of the Iron Range Building Trades Council deplored the September 9 action, the *Duluth News-Tribune* reported. Although he does not condone unsanctioned rallies, Skarich said, he doesn't "have a right to tell a man he can't go up there for a rally."

Local authorities, the news media, and many state politicians have branded the strikers as "thugs," "terrorists," and "criminals." Perpich has come in for criticism for not sending in the National Guard.

But a phone-in opinion poll of 2,000 people taken by KDLH television showed 75 percent of those who called favored the unions.

Twenty-one of those arrested had been arraigned on riot, arson, and assault charges by September 12. Bail for each has been set from \$13,000 to \$50,000.

Koochiching County Attorney David Johnson said felony charges were being prepared against at least another 20 people. They will be identified from videotapes, he said. Johnson has asked U.S. Attorney Jerome Arnold to file federal felony charges against those "who crossed state lines to take part in the melee." The FBI is assisting county authorities in their efforts to prosecute more workers.

City Attorney Joseph Boyle says he is prepared to bring charges against all union sympathizers, including bystanders, at the September 9 events. "If we have 200 trials, so be it," he said. Three mill workers were suspended from their jobs for two days for observing the rally. Two *Militant* salespeople were also arrested September 9, charged with "peddling without a license," and fined \$100 each.

The Minnesota AFL-CIO and building trades unions have called a strike support rally for the State Capitol in St. Paul on September 16.

Contributions to aid the defense of those arrested can be mailed to: Strike Fund Legal Fees, P.O. Box 86, Ranier, Minn. 56668.

## By Malcolm X

By Any Means Necessary	\$8.95
Malcolm X on Afro-American History	\$5.95
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Available from Pathfinder bookstores listed on page 12 or by mail from Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014. Include \$1.00 for postage and handling.

## Blow to antilabor disruption

Constitutional liberties and the rights of workers and working-class organizations to engage in political activity free of arbitrary legal harassment have been strengthened by the recent court victory scored by the Socialist Workers Party.

For more than 10 years the party has been the target of a harassment and disruption lawsuit prepared, organized, and financed by an antilabor group known as the Workers League.

The suit — filed by Alan Gelfand, a lawyer who is employed by Los Angeles County and is associated with the Workers League — charges that the SWP is run by FBI agents, and demands that the courts overturn his expulsion from the party and remove the party's elected leadership. Gelfand's claim is that his constitutional rights were violated because "FBI agents" in the party's leadership engineered his expulsion.

A Los Angeles federal court judge categorically ruled that "there is no evidence" to back up Gelfand's accusations, and that his motivation in bringing the suit was "to disrupt the SWP." The judge concluded that the years of "pretrial discovery" had as one of its main purposes "to generate material for political attacks on the SWP by the Workers League."

It is anticipated that Gelfand and the Workers League will continue the harassment and disruption effort by filing an appeal. They will have 30 days from the judge's entry of the final order in the case to file. A campaign to publicize this victory is needed now and can take advantage of the time available before the appeals process begins.

Making the ruling known as widely as possible — in the labor movement, among women's and civil rights organizations, political activists, and defenders of civil liberties — and explaining its significance will be the best way to enlist support and financial contributions for the next round in this battle.

Publicizing this victory also has another purpose. It should inspire confidence in fighters for union rights and social justice that it is possible to take on and push back the insidious harassment and disruption efforts of outfits like the Workers League. In particular, it exposes the antilabor methods and character of the Workers League itself.

Supporters for justice for Mark Curtis are the most immediate beneficiaries of this victory. The Workers League's main activity today is to smear and disrupt the international defense effort for Mark Curtis, a unionist currently serving a 25-year jail term in an Iowa state prison on frame-up rape and burglary charges. It has peddled the cops' case and smeared the defense effort, labeling it a "political provocation by the Socialist Workers Party ... with the aim of discrediting socialism and the workers' movement."

Publicizing the ruling greatly strengthens the international effort on Curtis' behalf and will help further expose the nature of the Workers League disruption tactics. The SWP's court victory is a powerful weapon to cut through this effort to undermine Curtis' defense and should be used aggressively.

## New York's primary elections: what they showed

BY DOUG JENNESS

A lot of working people in New York City are fed up with Mayor Edward Koch. That's one conclusion that can be drawn from the results of the Democratic primary election on September 12, where Manhattan Borough President David Dinkins defeated Koch by a substantial majority.

They're sick and tired of the mayor's provocative racial bigotry and his indifference to deteriorating social conditions, including mounting homelessness, unemployment, and the harmful effects of an inflation rate that is substantially higher in the city than the national level.

The election results also show that the recent lynch-mob killing of Yusuf Hawkins in Brooklyn does not re-

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flect some big rise in racist attitudes in the city's population as a whole. Nor did the protests against this murder lead to a "white backlash" at the polls against Dinkins, the city's first capitalist politician who is Black to be nominated by the Democratic or Republican parties as a candidate for mayor. Not only did Dinkins garner 90 percent of the votes of Blacks voting in the primary, but he captured a significant one-third of the votes of Democratic voters who are white.

Those who voted for Dinkins hope that if he defeats the Republican contender, Rudolph Giuliani, in the November 7 general election, conditions in the city will get better, or at least they'll stop getting worse. However, if this year's mayoralty race, as it has unfolded so far, is any sign, this seems to be an unlikely prospect.

If anything marked the race among the six candidates in the Democratic and Republican primaries, it was their universal contention that the city's main problem is that 26,300 cops are insufficient to fight drugs and "crime," and more should be added to the force.

The proposed increases range from 1,200 by Democratic contender Harrison Goldin to more than 10,000 by Republican cosmetics heir Ronald Lauder. Mayor Koch called for 4,000 new cops, while Dinkins has made one of his principal slogans: "Put a cop on every subway train at night." He also urges that the number of cops on foot patrol be doubled.

In addition to beefing up the cops, the candidates agreed on increasing jail or other detention capacity for alleged offenders. Giuliani said 4,000–5,000 more cells are needed and military camps should be considered for use as detention facilities. Koch boasted that during his administration, the number of jail cells doubled, and he'd build more if necessary. Dinkins calls for creating "boot camps" for first-time offenders.

Working people, especially those in the Black and Latino communities, are deeply concerned about the epidemic proportions of drug trafficking and its evil effects. They want the government to take some decisive action to deal with the problem. Taking advantage of this sentiment, the capitalist rulers see an opportunity to get wider acceptance for strengthening their repressive apparatus, including from sectors of the working class normally most suspicious or hostile to cops.

This is the entire framework of capitalist politicians across the country, including in the New York mayoralty race.

Moreover, who the capitalist rulers consider to be criminals are a big part of the working class — rebellious youth, militant unionists, and what they refer to as the "under class." In many different ways they attempt to portray these layers as a "criminal class" that needs to be intimidated and repressed.

But the truly criminal class is the capitalists themselves, who have launched the bloodiest slaughters the world has ever seen, who rob the lion's share of the wealth working people produce, who rake in billions of dollars from the drug trade, and who are responsible for the daily wear and tear on the health and welfare of workers. But these are not the criminals for whom the proposed new jail cells and boot camps are intended.

Another central feature of the New York mayoral race has been the common failure to deal with the deteriorating living and working conditions of working people.

Just one example is that nearly 40 percent of the city's 1.7 million children live in poverty. Infant mortality is rising, and more than 7,000 children live in homeless families. The *New York Times* editors on August 4 admitted that neither Koch nor any of the "other candidates have given the issue the attention it demands."

But there is one candidate on the ballot in the November election who has an entirely different approach to what's needed.

James Harris, the Socialist Workers Party candidate, doesn't start with the idea of what the mayor's office can do for working people, but what workers must do ourselves to unify to fight effectively to protect ourselves from the attacks by the employers and from the growing hardships and insecurities imposed by the unfolding crisis of capitalism.

## Is South Africa gov't 'legitimate'?

State Department spokesperson Margaret Tutwiler has extended Washington's congratulations to F.W. de Klerk, South Africa's new president, and affirmed the Bush Administration's willingness to work with the new government "in a substantial effort to end apartheid."

Although Washington has a few criticisms of the new regime, Tutwiler said — for example the elections weren't free and fair — these don't mean the government isn't legitimate. Not like in Panama, said Tutwiler, where Washington refuses to recognize the government.

De Klerk was elected by only 6 percent of the population of that country. The majority of South Africans have no voting rights. Indians and Coloureds (people the regime classifies as having mixed ancestry) have the right to elect delegates to separate Indian and Coloured chambers in the parliament, but these bodies have no real decision-making power.

The Pretoria regime is not a legitimate government of the majority of South Africa's people and should be isolated and treated as a pariah internationally.

The majority of South Africans are fighting to free themselves of the brutal rule of apartheid.

Their struggle for freedom is hailed by democratic-minded people and fellow fighters in every corner of the globe. The South African vanguard liberation organization, the African National Congress, has appealed to supporters of freedom and justice internationally to get out the truth about the white-minority government, and the daily atrocities it commits in South Africa.

Nelson Mandela is the world's most famous political prisoner and millions have called for his release along with the other captives of the regime.

This international spotlight on apartheid has increased

pressures on Pretoria's allies, the two biggest being the imperialist rulers in the United States and Britain. They find themselves having to take a more critical stance toward the white rulers of South Africa.

What is needed now, as the South African masses continue to do their part inside the country, courageously defying the government's restrictive laws, is not to put the stamp of legitimacy on the de Klerk regime. Instead, all supporters of the struggle against apartheid need to step up the demand on Washington, London, and other governments to adopt comprehensive and mandatory economic sanctions against the white minority regime and cease all political and diplomatic relations with the apartheid rulers.

The ANC has put forward in an 11-page document describing the necessary climate in which negotiations could take place. Lifting of the three-year state of emergency, releasing all political prisoners, and unbanning all anti-apartheid organizations are among the conditions outlined. The Organization of African Unity and the Movement of Nonaligned Countries have both adopted the demands.

In a June statement released by ANC President Oliver Tambo, this subject is discussed.

"Experience has shown," said Tambo, "that every policy shift or even 'reform' and the divisions among the ruling whites, have come about as a consequence of domestic and international pressures."

"We therefore call on the international community," he continued, "to apply effective pressures and to deny the regime the political, financial, and material resources to continue to implement apartheid and maintain itself in power."

## Ojeda's acquittal: a big victory!

The acquittal of Puerto Rican proindependence fighter Filiberto Ojeda Ríos on August 26 by an all-Puerto Rican jury in Puerto Rico is an important victory for both the independence struggle in that country as well as for fighters for social justice the world over.

Ojeda is one of the Hartford 15 defendants accused by the U.S. government of conspiracy in a 1983 \$7 million robbery of a Wells Fargo depot in Hartford, Connecticut. He was the victim of FBI surveillance for months up to the day of his arrest Aug. 30, 1985, when dozens of heavily armed U.S. government police agents invaded his house in Puerto Rico.

The independence fighter was brought to trial for allegedly resisting arrest and wounding an FBI agent. It was for this reason that he was kept in prison and repeatedly denied the right to bail during his almost four years' incarceration. At many hearings before U.S. federal judges, his request for bail was denied on the grounds that he was "dangerous." His acquittal flies in the face of this charge, which was a direct attack on the presumption of innocence.

Ojeda's acquittal comes in the wake of a proindependence demonstration of 80,000 held in Puerto Rico on June 17. Demanding an end to U.S. colonialism, the march was provoked by the U.S. Congress proposal for a plebiscite on the political status of the island.

Upon his acquittal and release from prison, Ojeda stated that the jury's decision amounted to a "mini-plebiscite." The Puerto Rican people "realized that if they condemned me, they were condemning themselves to slavery."

The fact that Ojeda was released on bail and can remain in Puerto Rico is another important victory. Democratically minded people, though, must express their outrage at the conditions of his release: He is forced to wear an electronic bracelet, must report to U.S. government authorities three times a week, and is subject to a 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. curfew. All of Ojeda's democratic rights should be restored and all pending charges against him dropped.

# Black coal miners: lost chapter in labor history

*Black Coal Miners in America: Race, Class, and Community Conflict 1780-1980*, by Ronald L. Lewis. Lexington, Kentucky: University Press, 1987, \$25. 239 pp.

BY CLARE FRAENZL

A lost chapter in U.S. labor history — the role of Black workers in the struggle to build and defend the United Mine Workers of America — has been filled in part by the publication of a new book, *Black Coal Miners in America: Race, Class, and Community Conflict 1780-1980*. Inter-

## IN REVIEW

twined in the narration is the story of the UMWA's struggle against racism and its decisive effect on the union's ability to defend miners' interests.

Lewis divides the coalfields geographically into three regions — southern, central Appalachia, and the North and Midwest. His discussion of the southern coalfields is most interesting.

Lewis recounts how Black slave labor was first used to exploit Virginia's coal deposits in the 1760s. After the defeat of the post-Civil War Reconstruction in the late 1870s, vagrancy laws were used to imprison thousands of Black workers and farmers. As convicts, their labor was sold for pennies a day. It was this cheap labor that developed the fabulous wealth of the southern coalfields. Lewis gives some statistics:

"Tennessee Coal & Iron Co. (TCI), in 1888," he writes, "had a new 10-year lease under which the company agreed to accept all able-bodied male convicts for \$9-\$18.50 per month depending on their classification."

Pratt Mines Division of TCI operated 10 coal mines in 1895 with convicts concentrated in Shaft No.1 and Slope No.2, Lewis continues. Together No.1 and No.2 contained

900 convicts, over 80 percent of them Black, who worked 313 days that year producing 1.5 million tons of coal.

By 1900 a full 38 percent of southern miners were Black. In Alabama, the leading coal producing state in the South, 54 percent were Black.

Black and white miners fought side by side for their union. Their struggle pitted them against the convict labor system and Jim Crow segregation. The UMWA became the only labor organization in the United States with an integrated membership and leadership. This feat, achieved around the turn of the century and during the height of southern reaction, won the UMWA a reputation as a defender of Black rights.

Lewis places West Virginia in his central Appalachia region, where Blacks made up 22 percent of miners by 1900. Many had migrated from the South seeking social equality. Thousands of armed Black miners took part in the famous Mingo County and Cabin Creek battles to organize the mines in the 1920s. They faced off with the local and state police and the National Guard. It was in West Virginia that the UMWA had its strongest foothold.

The story Lewis paints in the northern and midwestern coalfields is not so edifying. There, the work force was almost entirely white. The percentage of miners who were Black reached its peak of 3 percent in 1930.

Coal barons in these areas recruited thousands of Black miners from the South with promises of better wages and working conditions. But when they arrived, Lewis points out, they often found fellow miners embroiled in bitter strikes. Most refused to be strikebreakers and returned to the South, says Lewis, or made their way to the large northern cities. However, coal bosses were more successful here in dividing miners and breaking several major strikes.

In a chapter entitled, "Demise of the Black Miner," Lewis documents the collusion of UMWA President John L. Lewis with the largest coal operators to mechanize the mines in

the 1940s and '50s, eliminating half the work force in exchange for better wages and working conditions for those remaining. In the 1950s, more than 250,000 coal miners were laid off. Black miners were disproportionately victimized because the bosses refused to train them on the new equipment.

The author points out that despite Black miners' protests at national conventions, the UMWA refused to fight against the discriminatory layoffs. The strength and unity of the UMWA was seriously undermined.

The systematic elimination of Black miners continued over three decades. Their numbers in the industry fell from 55,142 to 30,242 between 1930 and 1950. In southern Appalachia, where Blacks were most concentrated, the decline was even more drastic, dropping from a total of 42,266 in 1930 to 26,136 in 1950. By 1970 the figure was 3,673.

Lewis details the retreat of the UMWA in defending Black miners, which coincided with the advent of mechanization.

He notes this was also reflected in the presidential campaign of Arnold Miller, a leader of Miners for Democracy. This reform movement grew up as a challenge to Lewis' and his successor's policy of collaboration with the coal bosses at the expense of miners' interests.

Miller refused to run a Black on his slate and urged Black supporters not to run in district and local elections. This policy weakened the reform movement, Lewis states, and underestimated the consciousness of white miners, who elected Blacks in several nearly all-white districts on the basis of their progressive politics. Despite Miller's policies, many Blacks supported Miners for Democracy.

Clare Fraenzl is a former underground coal miner in Pennsylvania and is currently a member of United Steelworkers of America Local 1196 in Brackenridge, Pa.

## LETTERS

### Mark Curtis

I appreciated your response to my letter concerning my friend Mark Curtis.

I'm serving a five-year term with one year done. I have 16 months left, but I'll be getting an early release no later than March 1990.

Our Martin Luther King, Jr., Organization has formed a committee called Special Concerns. I was chosen to be a part of it. My work will continue upon my release, as our kids of tomorrow need to be educated about all walks of life.

I'm concerned about the future of all human beings in this cruel America. But if you don't speak up, you won't be heard. Once I'm in a better position, I'll be able to be a part of the international campaign in defense of Mark, and anyone with the same problem. I wish you well and hope times will get better in our struggle.

A prisoner  
Anamosa, Iowa

### Ochoa

Readers protesting Cuba's execution of drug-trafficker Gen. Arnaldo Ochoa remind me of colonialist socialists deplored the uncivilized behavior of Third World socialist "natives." Aside from that, there are four points they seem to miss:

1. The seriousness of the crime is underestimated.

2. The warlike situation facing Cuba is missed. Tiny Cuba faces fierce, intransigent hostility from the colossus of the north.

In a sense, the Cuban revolution hangs by a thread in this world. (That thread — its prestige — is what Ochoa tried to sever.) This is especially true today with the triumph of the capitalist-loving bureaucrats in the Soviet Union.

3. The death penalty is fetishized, divorced from all other aspects of reality. Should readers who (I hope) cheered the battlefield annihilation of the murderous contras bemoan the execution of a man who threatened the lives of millions?

4. The difference between Cuba today and a future postrevolutionary United States goes right by these readers. When U.S. imperialism is overthrown, humanity will have driven the wooden stake into the heart of imperialism. U.S. socialists can then luxuriate in the most generous and magnanimous policies, in-

cluding the elimination of the death penalty. But the world would be a much different place then, wouldn't it?

Steve Eckardt  
Chicago, Illinois

### Sri Lanka

The *Militant* received from Bala Tampoe, general secretary of the Ceylon Mercantile, Industrial and General Workers' Union, the following copy of his letter dated Aug. 9, 1989, addressed to the president of Sri Lanka, R. Premadasa.

Dear Sir,

The General Council of our union decided last Sunday, August 6, to condemn the killing of unarmed people by state forces, whether they be engaged in putting up posters or violating curfew orders or other such nonviolent acts, even though such acts may be illegal under Emergency Regulations made by you.

Our General Council also decided to condemn the killing of unarmed persons, described as "suspected subversives," either by the police or by armed services personnel, acting openly or secretly, or by secret groups acting under their protection.

We condemn, in particular, the killing by shooting with an automatic weapon of Himesiri Gamage, who was a member of our union employed at Singer Industries (Ceylon) Ltd., Ratmalana, in front of his workplace, by a gunman accompanied by another.

We are strongly of the view that even if our member was an active adherent of an organization engaged in what your government regards as subversive activity, unknown to us, there was no justification for his being killed in cold blood for that reason.

We have no reason to suspect that our member who was killed was a "terrorist." On the other hand, we are of the view that his killing was undoubtedly an act of terrorism. We have reason to suspect that this was done by persons belonging to a special group operating secretly from within or under the protection of the forces of which you are constitutionally the commander in chief as president.

In the above circumstances, we call upon you to make a public statement with regard to the killings that

have been taking place in various parts of the country, of unarmed persons by members of the armed forces under your command.

We are of the view, as we have said before, that state terrorism, i.e. the killing or injuring of unarmed people, to repress either terrorist or subversive activity, is not only a violation of human rights, but is also futile. It does not deter those who are actually engaged in terrorist violence from continuing to do so. On the contrary, it often serves to drive other persons, bereaved or angered by state terrorism, to resort to similar violence themselves.

Bala Tampoe  
General Secretary  
Ceylon Mercantile, Industrial and General Workers' Union

### Clips and quotes

I enjoy the Great Society column of clips and quotes, but I have one suggestion. Perhaps you could include the source of each bit of information after the brief paragraph or quote.

I often find myself wondering where these inside or off-the-cuff items were found and I think it would add greatly to the validity of the point you make.

M.C.  
Long Island, New York

### Harry Ring replies:

With few exceptions, the material in the Great Society column is based on items in the capitalist media.

In part they are gleaned in the course of reading several papers a day. Currently, a majority of items in the column are from clippings sent in by readers in U.S. cities and in other countries, among them Canada, Britain, Australia, and New Zealand. These contributions are much appreciated and we hope their numbers will continue to grow.

When the column is turned in to the editor, each item is accompanied by the clipping or other source on which it is based. (This practice is followed with all *Militant* articles that include information from other sources.)

Like all the sources used in the paper, those for the Great Society are kept on file for six weeks. Occasionally, readers inquire about the source of a particular item. Within that time period, we're able to provide it.



Where we reprint items verbatim from other papers, we do cite the source. Otherwise, in general, we don't.

More important, while we use facts from the capitalist press, we try to strip away the verbiage used to slant, twist, or obscure what's being reported. In such cases, to cite the source could suggest that this is the way it was originally presented.

But we do recognize that there are particular cases where it could be more effective to cite the source, and we will keep this in mind.

Occasionally, a reader has commented, "Some of your items are really wild. Do you make those up?"

Nope. It wouldn't get past the editor and, besides, there's no need. In this society, each week there are more such facts than we can print.

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

# Mexican gov't attacks miners' union

## Cananea Mining Co. closed

BY HARVEY McARTHUR

CANANEA, Mexico — One morning last month a long convoy of army trucks rumbled into this small town in northern Mexico. Armed helicopters circled overhead as thousands of troops occupied the huge state-owned copper mine at the edge of town. The soldiers quickly rounded up all the miners then working and expelled them from the company grounds.

A few hours later, the Mexican government announced it had closed the Cananea Mining Co., asserting that the mine was bankrupt. Although Cananea reported profits of \$75 million in 1988, the government said it had accumulated a \$650 million debt and was unable to meet its payments. The government blamed the union and workers for low productivity and inefficiency.

"All the workers will be fired," declared Carlos Torres, director of operations at Cananea. The company would "definitely" reopen, he added, but "only those workers necessary for basic operations would be rehired."

Torres acknowledged that the government's aim was to break the union that represents the 3,000 production workers at the mine. "There has to be another union," he told the *Tucson Citizen*.

The Cananea miners are organized by Local 65 of the National Miners Union, which has 250,000 members nationwide. They are among the highest-paid industrial workers in the country, earning from \$3,000 to \$4,000 a year.

This attack on the miners' union comes as the Mexican government is trying to sell many state-owned companies to capitalist investors and to impose wage cuts and speedup on Mexican workers. The government headed by President Carlos Salinas, is imposing this antilabor program under pressure from U.S. and other foreign bankers to make possible continued interest payments on Mexico's \$100 billion foreign debt.

The Cananea mine has been up for sale since last year. However, as the *New York Times* reported August 30, "Bankers and mining analysts here say that . . . efforts to sell Cananea have been hampered by the extremely generous terms of labor agreements negotiated since 1971, when ownership of the mine passed from the hands of the Anaconda Copper Co. to the Mexican government. . . . Mr. Salinas has broken the power of the union and made the mine a much more attractive property."

The government action "hit us as a surprise," said Hector Luna, a leader of Local 65. At the time, most of the union's leadership was in Mexico City trying to negotiate a new contract with the government.

The union immediately demanded that the government withdraw the troops and reopen the mine. Local 65 held assemblies of thousands of miners and several protest marches to back up these demands.

#### Mine officials' corruption

The union disputed the government's claim that the mine was bankrupt, saying that



Militant/Harvey McArthur

Miners' assembly August 26, Cananea, Mexico, to back union demands.

any financial problems were due to corruption and mismanagement by government-appointed directors. Opposition politicians also denounced the closing of the mine and called for a federal investigation into allegations of corruption by top mine officials. On August 31 the government arrested Emilio Ocampo, former director of the mine, charging he had defrauded the company of millions of dollars.

In an initial response to the miners' pro-

tests, a leader of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), Luis Donaldo Colosio, met with union leaders in Cananea August 24. Later that night, the troops were withdrawn from the mine.

The union then lifted its 15-day deadline for reopening the mine. "Now we can work peaceably toward negotiations for a new contract and returning to work," Luna said after the meeting with Colosio.

Local 65 sent delegations to Mexico City to try to negotiate the reopening of the mine. At the same time, the union sought government agreement to give the miners severance pay equal to 43 days' pay for each year worked, instead of the 12 days' pay per year worked offered by the government. On September 1, however, a union spokesperson said the government was refusing to meet any of the union's demands.

#### Government austerity measures

The closing of the Cananea mine is the latest in a series of blows suffered by Mexican workers this year as Salinas imposed austerity measures and reached a new agreement with the U.S. government and foreign bankers on paying the foreign debt.

The government first arrested top leaders of the oil workers' union, charging them with corruption, and sent troops to occupy refineries and other petrochemical plants. Management of these state-owned plants then tore up the oil workers' contract and imposed wage cuts and speedup in production.

The next victims were workers at the state-owned airline Aeroméxico. The government declared the airline bankrupt, fired all the workers, and later resumed operations with a smaller work force.

In June thousands of workers at state-owned steel mills in Monclova were fired as part of an agreement between Salinas, the World Bank, and the Export-Import Bank of Japan.

The move against the miners "came out of the meetings between Salinas and [U.S. President George] Bush to settle the debt," Cananea miner Juan Alvarez explained in an interview here. "Just as they did with the oil workers, Aeroméxico, and the steelworkers, they want to crush our union."

The government is "meeting the conditions imposed by the International Monetary Fund," Oscar Saenz, a union spokesperson, said. "They want to be able to pay the interest on the debt without worrying about the reaction of the workers, of the unions."

The Cananea miners have sent delegations seeking public support to Mexico City, Nogales, and Hermosillo in Mexico and to Tucson, Arizona, Saenz reported. Support marches have been held in several Mexican towns, and a few unions have sent food to the unemployed miners.

# Thousands on strike in Québec

BY JOHN STEELE

MONTRÉAL — In the middle of an election campaign that ends September 25, the Liberal Party government of Québec Premier Robert Bourassa is facing a challenge from 40,000 striking Québec nurses.

The nurses, who have been waging a strike since September 5, are in the forefront of a growing mobilization of 340,000 government workers who are fighting for substantial wage increases, including wage parity for women.

The Québec Federation of Nurses (FIIQ), which was formed in 1987, has refused to buckle to government threats even though it faces heavy penalties under Law 160 — Québec's Essential Services Act. Under this union-busting law the nurses are now losing two days' pay and one year's seniority for each day on the picket line.

On September 8 contempt-of-court charges were laid against FIIQ President Diane Lavallée, Vice-president Raymonde Bosse, and Communications Director Lucille Auger.

None of the government's moves have deterred the strikers, who have set up picket lines at hospitals and health centers throughout Québec. Emergency services are being provided by the nurses.

"I think it [loss of seniority] will have a rejuvenating effect," said Lavallée. "Our members will feel one year younger every day on the picket line, and we will be more determined and energetic than ever."

The nurses went back to work on September 12 as a 24-hour truce called by the FIIQ went into effect. The government had agreed to negotiate during this period.

However, now 95,000 CSN health-care workers have walked out in an unlimited strike. A 24-hour strike by thousands of CEGEP (high school) teachers organized by the CSN to protest the slowness of negotiations also took place September 12.

Behind the nurses' determination are the intolerable conditions they face. Québec nurses are the lowest-paid nurses in Canada.

In addition, 60 percent of Québec's nurses work part-time, and one-half of these are on call. It takes 10 years of service to move from night shift to day shift. Night-shift nurses receive additional wages of only 81 cents an hour. The vast majority of nurses suffer from back and leg pain and problems related to stress.

As part of its policy of cutbacks in spending on health, education, and social services the Bourassa government has rejected the nurses' demand for a three-year contract with a wage increase of 5 to 10 percent in the first year, 6 to 7 percent in the second year, and 4 percent in the final year to match the rise in the cost of living.

Calling the nurses' action "electoral blackmail" and "anarchy," Bourassa has up to now refused to budge from the government's position of 4 percent for the first year with no offers for the second and third. Instead, he issued a decree under Law 160 allowing the hospitals to hire scabs. Hiring "replacement workers" during strikes is illegal in Québec.

Many government workers are still feeling the effects of a 20 percent wage rollback for the first three months of 1983 imposed on them by the previous Parti Québécois government. Strike-breaking legislation was used by the PQ government at that time to end strikes called to protest the wage rollbacks. The PQ government was defeated in 1985 partly as a result of its strikebreaking actions.

#### Growing support

The nurses' defiance is receiving widespread support from working people throughout Québec and across the country.

Motorists honk their horns in support of nurses walking picket lines. Many hospital patients, some in wheelchairs, have expressed support for the strikers by joining the picket lines. Some hospital administrators whose budgets have been slashed by the government have also backed the nurses.

Leaders of two of Québec's three main union federations, the Québec Teachers' Fed-

eration (CEQ) and the CSN have declared their support for the nurses. CSN President Gérald Larose in a letter to Premier Bourassa condemned the use of Law 160 and called for its repeal.

However, the day after the strike began, Louis Laberge, president of the Québec Federation of Labor (FTQ), the largest federation, condemned the strike, saying it would only aid in the reelection of the Liberal government. The FTQ in a special convention decided to give "critical support" to the Parti Québécois.

The CEQ and CSN have refused to endorse any party for the September 25 vote.

On September 11 New Democratic Party candidate for the riding of Vieux, Raymond Gagnon, along with five other east end Montréal NDP candidates, condemned the Bourassa government's "intransigence" in the negotiations with the workers. Gagnon called for the formation of a national coalition of unions and community and progressive organizations to organize a massive demonstration against Law 160.

On the same day the Revolutionary Workers League candidate in Laurier, garment worker Michel Dugré, who is a member of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, issued a statement calling for the dropping of the charges against the FIIQ leaders.

The statement pointed out that the nurses in fighting for their rights, including the right to strike, are fighting for all working people.

"The struggle of the nurses and the other public sector unions is part of a broad strike movement throughout North America," said the statement. "A number of these struggles, in particular the seven-month strike against Eastern Airlines in Canada and the United States, have generated broad solidarity activity. This is the kind of solidarity we need now to deal with the repression against the nurses."

Messages of solidarity should be sent to FIIQ, 1425, boul. René Lévesque ouest, 5<sup>th</sup> floor, Montréal (Québec), H3G 1T7. Phone: (514) 861-8328.